Hafa Adai!

Commerce starts 2021 CNMI Prevailing Wage Study survey. PAGE 2
22 employees at MVA continue to be furloughed. Page 3

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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www.saipantribune.com | WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2021 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

IPI won't be able to satisfy USDOL consent judgment by March 1

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI that the crane funds it was depending on to satisfy the consent judgment and purge itself of contempt in the lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Labor will not be released by March 1—the date the court earlier set for IPI to make the payment.

In a status report filed by IPI lawyer Michael Dotts, he said the removal of the crane has been completed. However, Finance Secretary David Atalig has asserted the CNMI's lien on all the crane funds, saying he will be intervening in the Superior Court action to enforce the lien.

"What this means is that the crane funds will not be available to make the payment to the U.S. Department of Labor

See IPI on Page 4

Cui found in contempt anew

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has found Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd. chair Cui Li Jie in contempt of court again, this time in the case filed by seven former construction workers.

Cui Li Jie

Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd. is the mother company of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.

According to U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona,

See CUI on Page 4

CNMI running balance for Yutu at $32.5M

» Received $29.7M reimbursements for Yutu expenses

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

To date, the CNMI is still waiting on the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse $32.5 million in costs associated with the devastation brought by Super

See $32.5M on Page 4

Half a million dead in US

By ADAM GELLER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

For weeks after Cindy Pollock began planting tiny flags across her yard—one for each of the more than 1,800 Idahoans killed by COVID-19—the toll was mostly a number. Until two women she had never met rang her doorbell in tears,

See HALF on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 23, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,727	0	7,727
Recovered	7,554	1	7,555
Active	52	0	52
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			125,285

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	143	0	143
Traced via Travel Screening	117	0	117
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			188

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 8,943	Dose 1: 373	Dose 1: 523
Dose 2: 6,602	Dose 2: 137	Dose 2: 170

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

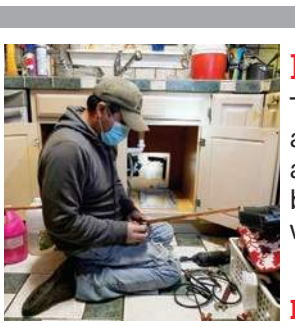
Source: Office of the Governor

BEAUTIFIED BASKETBALL COURT
Members of the House of Representatives minority bloc pooled their efforts yesterday to renovate and reinvigorate the Navy Hill basketball court, as shown in the court's repainted floor and new amenities. With the help of Tan Siu Lin Foundation, USA Fanter Corp., the Saipan Mayor's Office, the Department of Fire and Emergency services, and other volunteers, they repainted, repaired, and beautified the once unkempt basketball court, which will be open for public use very soon. NEIL FAMA

INSIDE

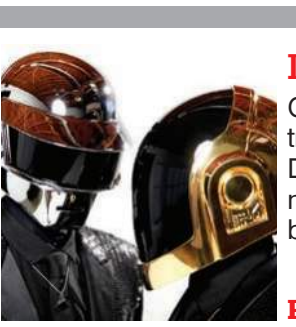
BUSINESS
CouplesCakery is the brainchild of Norissa San Nicolas Camacho and Donovan Jose P. Castro.

PAGE 11



NATION
Texans are still getting a sense of the wreckage left by the icy blast that hit Texas last week.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
Grammy-winning electronic music pioneers Daft Punk have announced that they are breaking up.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Commerce starts 2021 CNMI Prevailing Wage Study survey

The Central Statistics Division of the CNMI Department of Commerce announced yesterday the beginning of data collection for the 2021 CNMI Prevailing Wage Study to produce the hourly wage statistics for 2021.

All private businesses, public agencies, and organizations in the CNMI are urged to participate in the 2021 PWS survey. The survey data collection period will begin on March 1, 2021, and end on March 31, 2021.

Like the 2020 PWS, the 2021 data is submitted through a Web portal. Businesses and organizations can access it through cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp.

For companies, agencies, and organizations who registered and participated in the 2020 PWS survey, simply use your username and password that you created in 2020 to log in to the portal, update your company/agency/organization information, and submit your employee data for 2021.

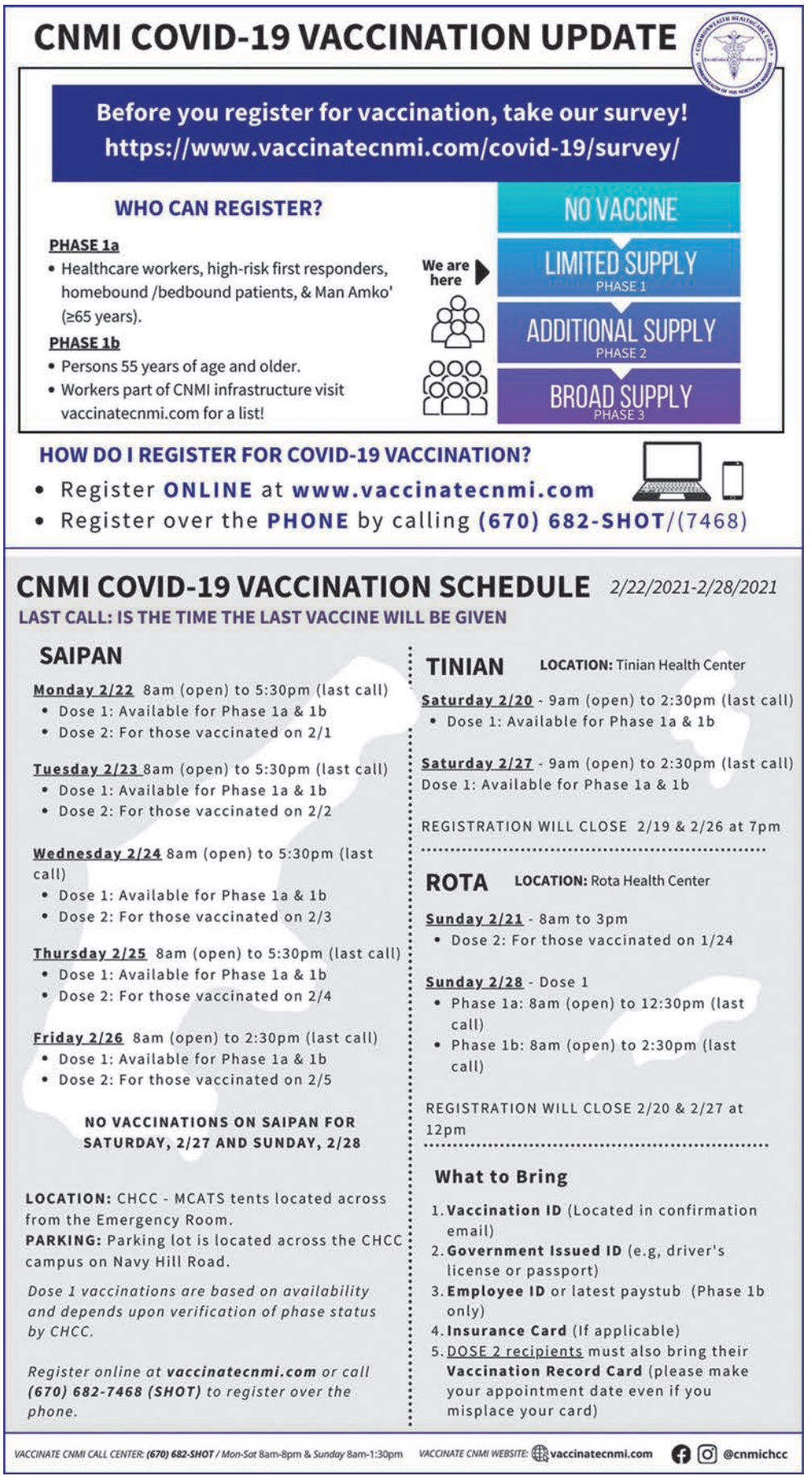
For everyone else who will submit survey data for the first time via the CNMI PWS portal, you will be prompted to create a username and a password. Creating your username and password registers you into the site and allows you to provide basic directory information about your company/agency/organization and submit the requested employee data for the survey. Be sure to allow yourself time to review and understand the survey instructions provided on the portal before proceeding to complete the survey.

The 2018 NMI US Workforce Act requires the CNMI to publish a prevailing wage report annually for CW-1 visa determination and approval by the U.S. Department of Labor. Additionally, the 2021 PWS data will be used to publish a separate report detailing the survey methodology with a more detailed occupational wage statistics for PERM, H-1B and H-2B determination and approval by the U.S. Department of Labor.

"We encourage all businesses, agencies, and organizations for cooperation and allocate time to complete this important survey. This will be our sixth round of the prevailing wage survey, but it is our third annual PWS survey since 2019 under the mandate of the 2018 Workforce Act. We also want to extend my appreciation to the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs for funding this project," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Commerce Secretary Mark O. Rabauliman emphasized the importance of completing the 2021 PWS survey. "We thank the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, the Rotary Club, the CNMI Society for Human Resources Management, as well as all the other organizations on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian for putting out the word and in promoting the success of this important survey," said Rabauliman. "In addition to meeting the requirement of the 2018 Workforce Act, the success of the 2021 PWS will also help us in our economic recovery efforts, and I humbly ask each and every business, agency, or organization in the CNMI to take some time to complete the 2021 PWS survey."

Questions and inquiries should be directed to the Prevailing Wage Project contacts at telephone numbers 322-3005/3007 or email address cnmi.csd@commerce.gov.mp. ***(PR)***


CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE
Before you register for vaccination, take our survey!
https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/covid-19/survey/
WHO CAN REGISTER?
PHASE 1a
• Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).
PHASE 1b
• Persons 55 years of age and older.
• Workers part of CNMI infrastructure visit vaccinatecnmi.com for a list!
We are here
NO VACCINE
LIMITED SUPPLY
PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY
PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY
PHASE 3
HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE 2/22/2021-2/28/2021
LAST CALL: IS THE TIME THE LAST VACCINE WILL BE GIVEN
SAIPAN
Monday 2/22 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/1
Tuesday 2/23 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/2
Wednesday 2/24 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/3
Thursday 2/25 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/4
Friday 2/26 8am (open) to 2:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/5
NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SATURDAY, 2/27 AND SUNDAY, 2/28
LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.
Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC.
Register online at vaccinatecnmi.com or call (670) 682-7468 (SHOT) to register over the phone.
TINIAN LOCATION: Tinian Health Center
Saturday 2/20 - 9am (open) to 2:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
Saturday 2/27 - 9am (open) to 2:30pm (last call)
Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/19 & 2/26 at 7pm
ROTA LOCATION: Rota Health Center
Sunday 2/21 - 8am to 3pm
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/24
Sunday 2/28 - Dose 1
• Phase 1a: 8am (open) to 12:30pm (last call)
• Phase 1b: 8am (open) to 2:30pm (last call)
REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/20 & 2/27 at 12pm
What to Bring
1. Vaccination ID (Located in confirmation email)
2. Government Issued ID (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. Employee ID or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. Insurance Card (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their Vaccination Record Card (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)
VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sat 8am-8pm & Sunday 8am-1:30pm
VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE: vaccinatecnmi.com
@cnmichcc

Palacios yet to decide to run for office next year

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said last week that he has yet to decide whether he will run for office in next year's gubernatorial elections.

In an interview at his office, Palacios said he has not really sat down to fully consider the idea of running for a government position in the 2022 elections.

He said, though that one "never say never" in politics.

Palacios just arrived on Saipan from the U.S. mainland three weeks ago after he was gone for three months due to a medical issue.

He said he and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres have not really talked about the 2022 election because of many different issues facing the CNMI right now.

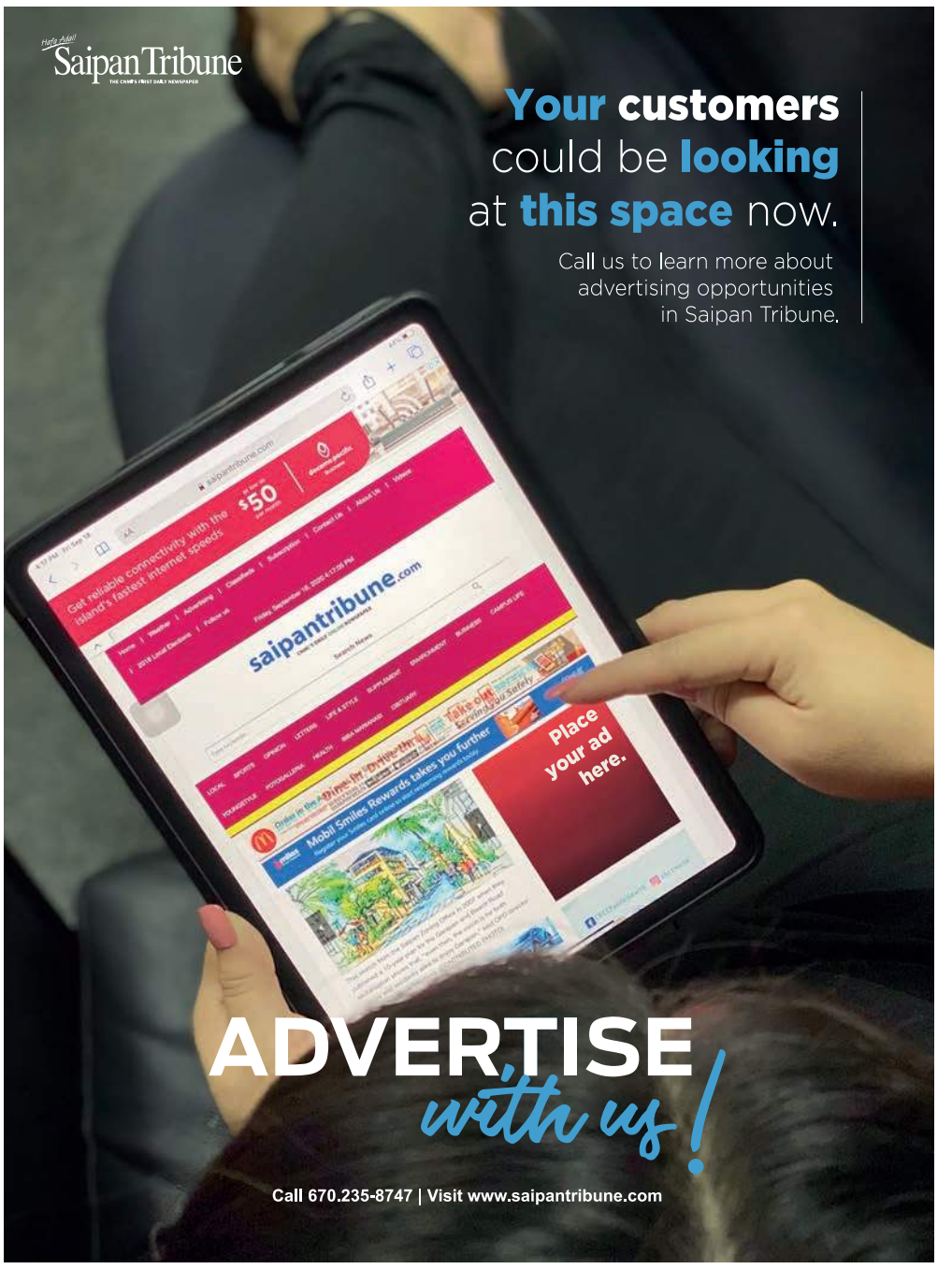
"To me, those kind of things if they come, they come," the lieutenant governor said.

Palacios said under the law, Torres can still seek re-election as governor.

Then-lieutenant governor Torres became governor in December 2018 following the death in office of the late governor Eloy S. Inos.

Torres, with Palacios as his running mate, won a full four-year term as governor at the Nov. 13, 2018, general elections.

Palacios said there are so many things on the table. "So much to be thankful and be grateful for. At the same time, we still got so much to address and face," he said.


Hafa Adai!
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Place your ad here.
ADVERTISE with us!
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WITH MVA'S FY 2021 BUDGET REDUCED TO 84%

22 employees at MVA continue to be furloughed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With only $2.1 million appropriated to the Marianas Visitors Authority in the fiscal year 2021 budget law—which is 84% less than the amount set in the fiscal year 2020 budget—MVA has made drastic cuts, including the continued furlough of 22 employees on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

In MVA's first quarter report for fiscal year 2021 dated Feb. 4 and submitted to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo disclosed that, as of that date, the CNMI government owes MVA $500,900 in its share of the Hotel Occupancy Tax in fiscal year 2019 and $6.77 million in fiscal year 2020, for a total of $7.27 million.

Iakopo said MVA has not received its share in HOT in fiscal year 2020 and that the funding it got from October to November 2020 was just MVA's share of the HOT in fiscal year 2019.

Iakopo said this year's budget provides $526,181 for personnel and the remaining $1,671,230 is for all others.

Due to this budget reduction, which began with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MVA board of directors has made drastic cuts to Marianas marketing and promotion, as well as other programs and services, she said.

With the continued furlough of 22 employees, MVA is sustaining its daily operations with 11 managers and one part-time staff, Iakopo said.

She said there was zero funding for MVA representative offices in China and Taiwan in fiscal year 2021. MVA's China office was closed last June 30, 2020, and MVA's Taiwan office was temporarily suspended last April 30, 2020.

There was also a 120-day suspension of the MVA representative office in Japan, which took effect from Oct. 1, 2020 to Jan. 31, 2021, Iakopo said.

Among other budget cuts cited in the report are:

■ Only $48,000 for the MVA office in Japan, compared to the $2.25 million in fiscal year 2020.

■ Only $261,000 for the MVA office in Korea, compared to $2.07 million in fiscal year 2020.

■ Decreased financial support to partner government agencies such as the Division of Parks and Recreation on Saipan, which helps maintain tourist sites.

■ Discontinued security and maintenance services at six tourist sites: Grotto, Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, Laulau Beach, and Obyan Beach.

■ Reduced trash collection in Garapan from daily to just twice a week and discontinued landscaping and maintenance services in Garapan along Beach Road and Coral Tree Avenue.

■ Suspension of the Beautify My Marianas program that offers cash incentives for qualified cleanups by the community.

■ Discontinued multi-language safety videos at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport and Managaha Island.

As for its travel bubble program, Iakopo said that MVA has taken the lead in moving forward with further discussions, preparation, and development of the program, with the consent of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors.

"We expect that the plan, once finalized, approved and implemented, will provide a blueprint—and even a model—for how tourism should be conducted," she said.

If successful, Iakopo said, they expect this program to serve as a model for further expansion of the travel bubble in the Marianas in 2021.

She said MVA, together with the Office of the Governor, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and other public and private partners, continue to work together in making sure that the safety of the community and visitors remain the top priority.

MVA is monitoring the current developments in Korea and Japan.

Iakopo said they continue to work with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors on the Public Private Partnership program working to build the CNMI as a world-class destination.

She added that they have 36 partners contributing to rejuvenating the "island's treasures."

CUC ADVISORIES

Finasisu Lane temporarily closed today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be a temporary road closure on Finasisu Lane near the Northern Marianas College and behind the As Terlaje Water Tank.

The road closure is needed to ensure Wastewater Operators have ample time and safe space to locate a buried manhole. The entrance to NMC from Chalan Monsignor Guerrero near the As Terlaje water tank will be closed today, Feb. 24, 2021, at 9am and reopened at 4:30pm. ***(PR)***

Water service interruption in parts of Kagman II today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be an emergency water service interruption today, Feb. 24, 2021 from 8am to 4pm for customers in the area of Kagman II on Chacha Road near Brother's Market toward Marine Beach and Kalamendok Lane.

This is due to a leak repair on an 8-inch distribution waterline near the Chacha Road and Hasngot Lane intersection. CUC's Contractor, AIC Marianas, will be performing the waterline repairs as part of the Leak Detection and Waterline Repair Project funded by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency. Water service to the affected areas should resume soon after the repairs at 4pm.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, proceed with caution and/or take an alternative route during the repair of the waterline. ***(PR)***

MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE

Rodney S. Cabarles, Chairman · Joseph T. San Nicolas, Vice Chairman · Joanna C. Aldan, Secretary · Ringo C. Reyes, Treasurer · Vacant, Board Member

Municipality of Tinian and Augiguan
P.O. Box 520059 • San Jose Village • Tinian, MP 96952
Email: tinianscholarship@gmail.com
Telephone: (670) 433-0504 • Facsimile: (670) 433-0504

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Meeting on Friday, February 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Tinian Public Library, San Jose Village Tinian.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of Minutes
  - • February 02, 2021 (TMSB Regular Meeting)
  - • February 10, 2021 (TMSB Regular Meeting)

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. NEW BUSINESS
- A. Letter of Consideration from 1 Spring 2021 Applicant
- B. Update Report on Additional Documents required from 2 Spring 2021 Applicants

IV. OLD BUSINESS
- A. Final Review of 2021 Annual Report

V. SCHEDULE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- A. TMS Staff Evaluation

VII. ADJOURNMENT

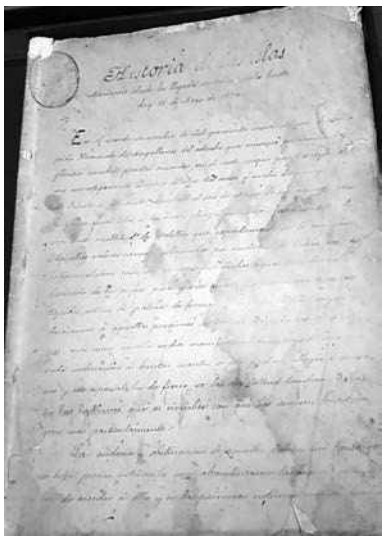
/S/Rodney S. Cabarles
Chairman

[1]We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments on the day of the meeting
[2]Pursuant to 1 CMC section 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.
[3]Individuals with special needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB office at least 48 hours prior to schedule meeting for assistance.

DCRM
SUMMER
INTERNSHIP
COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
The Division of Coastal Resources Management is looking for 15 CNMI-based college students or college-bound high school graduates with an interest in learning more about coral reef and coastal zone management. Our summer interns work 20 hours a week for 10 weeks from June to August and are paid $10.00 per hour.
To be considered, please submit the following documents by email to outreach@dcrm.gov.mp
CNMI EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION
Which can be found at www.cnmiopm.net
COVER LETTER
RESUME/CV
TRANSCRIPTS
Official or Unofficial
TWO (2) LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
Instructors and/or Employers Only
POLICE CLEARANCE
Within the Last 3 Months
COPY OF VALID PHOTO ID
Driver's License, Passport, etc.
APPLY BY FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021
This summer's internship opportunities include:
MARINE MONITORING ◦ EDUCATION & OUTREACH
SHORELINE MONITORING ◦ SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT ◦ REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ◦ WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
For more information, contact DCRM at
664-8300 or visit our website at WWW.DCRM.GOV.MP

UOG to obtain rare manuscript on Marianas history

A rare Spanish manuscript about the history of the Mariana Islands will be turned over to the University of Guam by a Spanish delegation visiting Guam for the quincentennial commemoration (500th anniversary) of Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe.



The cover of a "Memoria de las Islas Marianas" manuscript copy, originally written by the Spanish governor of Guam in the 1850s and one of only two known copies, that is being permanently deposited at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Spanish writing inside a "Memoria de las Islas Marianas" manuscript copy documenting the history and geography of the Mariana Islands in the 1800s. The manuscript, one of only two known copies, is now permanently at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

The head of the delegation, Adm. Santiago Barber y López, will present the manuscript to UOG president Thomas W. Krise this week to be permanently deposited at the Richard Flores Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center at UOG.

It will be viewable by the public later this year in a new exhibit at MARC.

The manuscript comes from an anonymous Spanish donor on behalf of the family of the last Spanish governor of the Mariana Islands, Don Juan Marina. The family is permanently depositing this heirloom at MARC so that it will be accessible for the people of Guam and the Mariana Islands.

The back cover of a manuscript copy titled "Memoria de las Islas Marianas," originally written by the Spanish governor of Guam in the 1850s, that is now permanently at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam.

The manuscript is a handmade copy of the original "Memoria de las Islas Marianas," which was written by an earlier governor during the 1850s, Felipe de la Corte y Ruano-Calderón, and published in Madrid in 1876.

"It appears that copies of this Memoria circulated in Guam in manuscript form during the late 1800s. This particular one was copied from a version that Father José Palomo had made. That makes it even more significant," said Carlos Madrid, director of research at MARC and the person who facilitated the donation.

Madrid added that the mere existence of the manuscript is testimony of the keen interest that the people of Guam in the 1800s had for the history and geography of the islands.

"CHamoru studies started back in the 1800s, and Father José Palomo was one of the early CHamoru scholars," he said.

The manuscript being turned over to MARC is the only known privately owned copy. Only one other manuscript copy is known to have survived and is part of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid in Spain. ***(PR)***

IPI

From Page 1

on March 1, 2021," Dotts said.

With less than a week until IPI's court-issued due date to satisfy the consent judgment, USDOL has already nominated a receiver to liquidate IPI's assets in the event IPI fails to comply.

According to USDOL attorney Charles Song, pursuant to the court's Jan. 28 order to nominate a receiver, USDOL has nominated NMI Settlement Fund trustee Joyce Tang as the proposed receiver and proposed to place IPI in a receivership limited to the liquidation of assets enough to purge contempt and pay the receiver's fees and costs.

Dotts said IPI is in the process of reviewing the proposed receivership and, if IPI has an objection to raise, it will do so by Feb. 25.

To date, to purge itself of contempt, IPI must pay $1.2 million to USDOL as owed under the 2019 consent judgment and fund an $800,000 escrow account by March 1.

Initially, lawyer Michael White was the proposed receiver during the Jan. 28 hearing with agreement from both IPI and USDOL but the court said that that was subject to White accepting the role.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona allowed the removal of one of the cranes at the worksite so IPI would petition the Superior Court to release the $2.3 million being held under the crane litigation fund.

The $2.3 million had been deposited with the CNMI Superior Court in case a lawsuit is filed relating to the cranes and their safety. Aside from one claim against those funds for $250,000, IPI can petition for the remainder of the funds after the removal of crane 4.

IPI was looking at using the crane litigation funds to satisfy the sanctions imposed on it pursuant to the USDOL lawsuit and to purge itself of contempt.

Back in April 11, 2019, USDOL, IPI, and its mother company, IPI Holdings Ltd., entered into a consent judgment related to alleged labor violations at the IPI construction site.

IPI first violated the consent judgment on Dec. 1, 2019, when it failed to pay USDOL $1,020,000.

In May 2020, USDOL discovered that IPI was not meeting its payroll obligations and was not in compliance with the judgment's prohibition against violating the Fair Labor Standards Act.

After unsuccessfully making every effort to secure IPI's compliance with the judgment, on Dec. 16, 2020, USDOL filed a petition for contempt because IPI failed to meet payroll obligations, required employees to work without pay, failed to provide payments to the Secretary of Labor, and other requirements per the 2019 consent judgment.

On Jan. 21, 2021, a hearing was held on USDOL's contempt petition and, based on the evidence presented by USDOL, the court found defendants in contempt of court for the continuous violation of the 2019 consent judgment by failing to make the scheduled payments and by violating the FLSA.

In a follow-up hearing on Jan. 28, 2021, IPI reported that it satisfied a portion of the consent judgment, including paying $788,022.54 and any other wages due to current IPI employees and restoring employee housing to habitable conditions.

The court ordered on Jan. 28 that IPI satisfy the remaining portion of the judgment by March 1 or the court may proceed with the appointment of a receiver to immediately begin liquidating IPI's assets to fulfill payment.

CUI

From Page 1

based on the motion filed by Aaron Halegua in support of the finding of contempt of Cui, there was adequate basis to find her in contempt because she failed to comply with the subpoena served by Bruce Berline, one of the lawyers who represent the seven workers.

Cui, who was present for the hearing yesterday, was ordered to pay, from her personal accounts, attorney fees for time and costs associated with preparing for the depositions and for conducting the Feb. 5 deposition.

The court also awarded plaintiffs fees and costs for preparing the motion for the court to issue the order to show cause, as well as preparing responses and for preparing for yesterday's proceeding, and the fees and costs for the plaintiffs' attempt to serve Cui the order to show cause.

Cui must pay the court-awarded fees by March 5 and she was given until this Friday to respond to the court's ruling.

The plaintiffs were given until Friday to file their timesheets with the court to determine exactly how much Cui must pay to purge herself of contempt.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Berline asked the court for the order to show cause and the threat of penalty against Cui.

Berline said he properly served Cui with a subpoena to produce documents and appear for a deposition on Jan. 26 at his office.

However, after serving Cui with the subpoena, an IPI executive allegedly tried to intimidate the process server via text messages that he would face "legal trouble" if he did not take back the subpoena. The next day, an IPI employee returned the subpoena to Berline's office.

On the morning of Jan 26, a notary public, the Chinese interpreter, and counsel for IPI arrived at Berline's office by 9am but neither Cui nor her personal lawyer, Juan Lizama, appeared.

Currently, Cui is still facing contempt charges in the case filed by the U.S. Department of Labor as IPI has yet to satisfy the remainder of the consent judgement against it.

HALF

From Page 1

seeking a place to mourn the husband and father they had just lost.

Then Pollock knew her tribute, however heartfelt, would never begin to convey the grief of a pandemic that has now claimed 500,000 lives in the U.S. and counting.

"I just wanted to hug them," she said. "Because that was all I could do."

After a year that has darkened doorways across the U.S., the pandemic surpassed a milestone Monday that once seemed unimaginable, a stark confirmation of the virus's reach into all corners of the country and communities of every size and makeup.

"It's very hard for me to imagine an American who doesn't know someone who has died or have a family member who has died," said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics at the University of Washington in Seattle. "We haven't really fully understood how bad it is, how devastating it is, for all of us."

Experts warn that about 90,000 more deaths are likely in the next few months, despite a massive campaign to vaccinate people. Meanwhile, the nation's trauma continues to accrue in a way unparalleled in recent American life, said Donna Schuurman of the Dougy Center for Grieving Children & Families in Portland, Oregon.

$32.5M

From Page 1

Typhoon Yutu in 2018, according to Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig yesterday, although some of that amount may be deemed "unallowable expenditure."

Testifying before the House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means chaired by Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), Atalig said their system reflects that the CNMI's running expense balance for Yutu's devastation is $32.5 million, pending FEMA reimbursement.

"This is my running balance in my system that we either need reimbursement or deemed unallowable expenditure," the secretary told *Saipan Tribune* when asked for clarification.

In response to Rep. Leila Staffler's (D-Saipan) question for clarification, Atalig said the CNMI spent over $100 millions for Yutu if they include all expenditures, including costs from component units.

Atalig said it's all recorded as one huge disaster account.

To date, he said, the CNMI has received $29.7 million in reimbursements for Yutu.

Atalig said Yutu and COVID-19 are two different disasters and are accounted for separately.

He said in the first quarter of fiscal year 2021, the Commonwealth received $5.4 million in reimbursements for Yutu expenses.

"We are still continuing to press on reimbursements from Yutu," said Atalig, adding that to date they have many requests for reimbursement for that typhoon's expenses.

He said they also submitted a request to reconsider those expenses that have been classified as non-reimbursable, although he said he does not have the details of the total number of what are deemed non-reimbursable.

"I am aware of one line item that's very clear. And that's the payroll of Yutu overtimes and response costs. Strictly on payroll," said Atalig, citing that the CNMI incurred a total of about over $16 million for Yutu overtime payments. He said the CNMI only received $8 million as reimbursement.

"So in my book, it's about 50%, half of that is being non-reimbursable and which the central government is liable," he said.

Atalig said they do have a lot of project awards that are still pending to be completed such as the hazard mitigation projects. He said they're looking at over $100 million worth of projects still waiting to get off the ground. Some of those projects are with the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power division.

"I believe it's over 1,000 more concrete poles that are still pending through hazard mitigation program," he said.

Atalig said there is also this underground power project from the power plant in Lower Base to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. He said he believes CUC is still working on getting the underground power project to the airport.

He said the projects are going through a lot of permitting requirements that take time such as environmental assessments and reports.

Atalig said it's a challenge for the CNMI to contract out these projects, especially with the labor shortage. "The administration is working on different avenues to find ways to bring in construction laborers," he said.

Unfortunately with the pandemic, it is not helping the CNMI's progress. "But it has not been forgotten. There's a lot of projects and more projects that can help our economy and also harden our CNMI," he added.

Guam governor wants Gogo as US Attorney for Marianas

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero has recommended the appointment of Guam-born Johnny Cepeda Gogo as U.S. Attorney for both the CNMI and Guam, a position that's currently held by Shawn Anderson.

Gogo

In her letter to U.S. President Joe Biden, Leon Guerrero said that Gogo, a Superior Court judge in Santa Clara, California, will bring to the position a much-needed perspective as a person of color and, as a Guam native, he knows the Marianas' unique culture and its challenges, which would be advantageous if he is appointed U.S. Attorney for the region.

In addition, Gogo's vast litigation and trial experience in prosecuting major narcotics and methamphetamines would serve as a valuable asset in the Marianas' fight against illegal substances, Leon Guerrero said.

Leon Guerrero pointed out that in his time serving the Santa Clara county, Gogo promoted youth advancement, secured justice for undocumented immigrants, addressed drug and gang violence, and served as a resource for those who felt ignored and forgotten.

"Judge Gogo would be a wonderful United States Attorney who will serve the people well and continue to give back to the community he serves," said Leon Guerrero.

Gogo has served Guam and Santa Clara, California, for 23 years through his legal job. He spent six years in the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office, serving in the community outreach office. He also worked with law enforcement to hold gun buy-back events, which removed 4,000 firearms from Santa Clara County.

In 2019, Gogo was appointed to the California bench by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Before the appointment, Gogo served as the Deputy District Attorney in Santa Clara, California, for 20 years.

Gogo is a member of the Guam Bar Association and has worked as an associate attorney at the Calvo & Clark law firm.

Gogo worked with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to collect 1,500 cell phones for domestic violence shelters.

Gogo stayed involved in the Santa Clara County high school mock trial competition for 20 years, and the Santa Clara County Bar Association created the Johnny Gogo Award that is given to volunteers who help the program.

Leon Guererro's recommendation for a new U.S. Attorney is pursuant to her demand that Anderson be removed for allegedly not complying with quarantine requirements.

The governor said Anderson's decision to challenge her executive orders created an atmosphere of noncompliance and threatens the local government's ability to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

Leon Guerrero described Anderson's actions as "arrogant" and "disrespectful."

Anderson became U.S. Attorney for Guam and the CNMI in May 2018.

Teacher sues Eucon, alleging labor violation

A former teacher at Eucon International School has filed a complaint against the school, alleging breach of contract and other allegations of labor violations.

Yantao Xia filed a suit against Eucon with the U.S. District Court for the NMI, alleging that Eucon required him to pay fees in exchange for sponsoring his CW-1 visa.

Xia said he was told to contact a person called "Rapture" for processing his documents. He believed that Rapture acted as an agent of Eucon.

On or about Aug. 24, 2018, Rapture provided Xia with an agreement with an entity called "CWM Trust, LLC" that would require Xia to pay $2,350 for visa processing, the lawsuit stated.

According to the lawsuit, CWM Trust LLC was operated at the same address as Eucon and by Eucon's own employees or agents and was controlled by Eucon and was an alter ego of Eucon.

Rapture required Xia to pay the $2,350 fee at the direction of Kan Christian Wei.

Xia alleged that the visa processing was entirely done by persons controlled by Eucon or Eucon's agents.

Xia is also suing Eucon for changing his job title following the expiration of his first contract to avoid paying him the prevailing wage.

Xia's first employment contract was from Oct. 1 2018, to Sept. 30, 2019. He arrived on Saipan on Jan. 25, 2019, under a CW1 visa sponsored by Eucon. Xia said that for the first two months at Eucon, he taught one Algebra II class, then additional workload was given to him before the summer of 2019, including assisting the librarian.

When the term of his first employment contract was to expire, Xia said Eucon made him sign a new employment contract that avoided making the school pay him the prevailing wage. He said Eucon also changed his job title to "library assistant" with a wage rate of $9.64.

But Eucon continued to make him teach classes with a rate substantially lower than the new prevailing wage and survey, the lawsuit stated.

According to Xia he was severely underpaid, and that from January 2019 to April 2020 he was paid a total of $8,657.44 only. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

Power service interruption on Monday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be a scheduled power service interruption on Monday, March 1, 2021, from 9am to 1pm for portions of Kagman III. The purpose of the power service interruption is to de-energize utility lines such that CUC linemen are able to safely replace a rotted primary power pole and deteriorated hardware on two (2) primary power poles along Puteng Drive in Kagman III.

■ **Monday, March 1, 2021- 9am to 10am (momentary interruption)**

❏ Outage Type: Sectionalized Momentary Interruption on the Feeder 4 Circuit (see map- blue line)

❏ Project Location: In Kagman III along Puteng Drive (behind Kagman High School)

❏ Power Service Areas Affected: Kagman III (portions of Puteng Dr., Pine Dr., Rosewood St., Hayu Ave., Nigas Ave., Ironwood St., Chopak Dr., Pepega Av., Matbas Rd. and Ladda St.)

❏ Water Well Affected: KG-23

❏ Wastewater Lift Station Affected: None

■ **Monday, March 1, 2021- 9am to 1pm**

❏ Outage Type: Sectionalized Interruption on the Feeder 4 Circuit (see map- red line)

❏ Project Location: In Kagman III along Puteng Drive (behind Kagman High School)

❏ Power Service Areas Affected: Kagman III (portions of Puteng Dr., Pine Dr., Rosewood St., Hayu Ave., Nigas Ave., Ironwood St., Chopak Dr., Pepega Av., Matbas Rd., and Ladda St.)

❏ Water Well Affected: KG-23

❏ Wastewater Lift Station Affected: None

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW21-ITB-020

MARPI LANDFILL CELL 2 REHABILITATION

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for **Marpi Landfill Cell 2 Rehabilitation, Saipan** Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **February 17, 2021** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred Fifty Dollars ($150.00) is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 05, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 16, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW21-ITB-020"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **9:30 a.m. local time March 23, 2021**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out the Notice of Intent Form in order to receive this additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bid documents. Notices of Intent form may be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30 a.m. local time, March 23, 2021**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp. **Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent Form will be subject to the rejection of bid**. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than March 23, 2021 and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement Services no later than April 02, 2021. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement Services, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **9:30 a.m. local time, April 06, 2021.** However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **9:30 a.m. local time, on March 23, 2021**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (**$25,000.00**) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission**. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Two Hundred Forty (240) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **Five Hundred (US$500.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ James A. Ada
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon
Acting Director Division of Procurement Services

ABA reiterates support for equal rights in US territories

The American Bar Association has once again expressed its support for recognizing that U.S. citizens in the territories should be entitled to the same constitutional protections as U.S. citizens anywhere.

ABA's House of Delegates passed yesterday a resolution, proposed by the Virgin Islands Bar Association, that supports recognizing the full application of the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable search and seizure to people and goods traveling between the U.S. territories and other parts of the United States.

Though the Supreme Court has identified the Fourth Amendment's protection from unreasonable search and seizure as a right that extends to the U.S. territories, a decision last year by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit deviated from this precedent. In United States v. Baxter, the Third Circuit applied the international "border search exception" to searches of people and goods traveling between the mainland United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In January, the Supreme Court denied a petition to review this decision, leaving unresolved whether the Fourth Amendment allows the warrantless search of people and goods, even in the absence of probable cause or reasonable suspicion, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

"The ABA resolution recognizes the injustice of having a rule for the Fourth Amendment's prohibition against unreasonable searches and seizures that protects citizens living in the 50 states and Puerto Rico but does not protect citizens living in other territories," said Neil Weare, president and founder of Equally American, which advocates for equality and civil rights for the nearly 4 million residents of U.S. territories. "We are grateful for the ABA's ongoing support of equal rights for residents of U.S. territories, and we appreciate the consistent leadership of the Virgin Islands Bar Association in raising these issues on the national stage."

The resolution supports an interpretation of the Fourth Amendment that would protect against unreasonable searches of people and goods traveling between the mainland United States and the U.S. territories. Further, the resolution supports the passage of legislation to enshrine these protections and abolish the application of the border-search exception to travel between the U.S. territories and other parts of the United States.

The full language of the resolution is as follows:

Resolved, That the American Bar Association supports an interpretation of the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution which would preclude application of the border-search exception to travel to or from a United States territory as is provided for travel to and from the fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Further resolved, That the American Bar Association supports the passage of appropriate legislation to abolish the border-search exception to the Fourth Amendment for travel between a United States territory and other parts of the United States.

The ABA also passed several other resolutions introduced by the Virgin Islands Bar Association, including Resolution 10C, which supports allowing federal judges in U.S. territories to assume senior status or to fully retire upon completion of their terms consistent with other federal judges appointed for limited terms. ***(PR)***

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Gao, Julie Marie S. Petitioner, vs. Gao, Feng Respondent,

FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0337

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 503236 CK Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950, It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2020.

/s/ Clerk of Court

PDM returns to monthly cleanup

After months of zero cleanups, PDM Promoters returned to its regular cleanup of Paseo de Marianas last President's Day on Feb. 15 and collected 780 lbs of trash.

A total of 21 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team and seven staff from Kinpachi Restaurant joined PDM Promoters in the cleanup, which also covered Coral Tree Avenue, the American Memorial Park Road, Beach Road, and all connecting alleyways.

"Our last volunteer cleanup was last February 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic we stopped due to health concerns, especially since most of our volunteers are children. We resumed our monthly cleanup of Paseo de Marianas last December when we collected 600 lbs of trash," said PDM Promoters coordinator Sonia Siwa.

In the December cleanup, PDM Promoters' volunteers also did bush-cutting and trimmed the plants along Paseo de Marianas. "Our volunteers got rid of tall weeds, picked up trash, and took thrown out debris from vacant lots."

Siwa added that PDM Promoters is glad that the CNMI government has controlled the local spread of COVID-19, as there's been no local transmissions for more than 180 days.

"Despite this present situation, we want to make sure that we are still involved in our community through this volunteer cleanup. For the past years, our volunteers picked up several tons of trash that could've gone into our ocean. And as we care for our environment we also want to give our local children a sense of belonging and that they are important to the community," she said.

PDM Promoters' monthly cleanups are usually held every Saturday and are supported by the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality and the non-profit's major sponsors, T-Galleria and TSL Foundation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 21 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team and seven staff from Kinpachi Restaurant pose for a picture after picking up 780 lbs of trash in PDM Promoters February cleanup of Paseo de Marianas.

Siwa said T-Galleria and TSL Foundation's support enables them to have the cleaning materials needed for their cleanups. Kinpachi Restaurant, meanwhile, provides the meal and snacks for volunteers.

Volunteers of PDM Promoters will be at it again in March when it conducts its second monthly cleanup of 2021. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 | 5:00 PM
Commonwealth Zoning Office | 2nd Floor Joeten Dandan Building
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.zoning.gov.mp

SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 02/03/2021 Zoning Board Meeting minutes
5. Public Comments *(not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)*

B. Public Hearings:
1. Conditional Use Application #2020-4506 – Marians Hemp Farms is proposing to utilize 5 (Five) Cargo Containers, 2 (Two) 20 foot and 3 (Three) 40 foot, to construct a 1-storey building structure measuring 43'.7" (L) x 208'.10" (W) for its Cannabis Farm Use. This site is located on Lot No. 103 D 06 in the Village of Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Rural zoning district.

C. New Business
1. Operations Reports (Permitting & Enforcement)

D. Miscellaneous
1. Next Meeting – April 7th
2. Other Matters

E. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link:
https://zoom.us/j/6853007492?pwd=Q0daYlNPMDdXdFlQRTQ4UkhFRjViUT09
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Marianas Hemp Farms

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Marianas Hemp Farms is proposing to utilize 5 (Five) Cargo Containers, 2 (Two) 20 foot and 3 (Three) 40 foot, to construct a 1-storey building structure measuring 43'.7" (L) x 208'.10" (W) for its Cannabis Farm Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 103 D 06 in the village of Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **March 3, 2021**
Time: **5:00 pm**
Place: **Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, March 02, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman

NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Board of Trustees Special Meeting
at
NMTI, Lower Base
February 26, 2020 – 10:00am

AMENDED AGENDA

I. Meeting Called to Order (Establishment of a quorum)

II. Adoption of Agenda

III. Public Comments

IV. New Business

1. Transition
A. Appointment of Interim CEO
B. Establishment of Institute Accounts
C. Employee Contracts
D. Da'ok Academy
E. EDA NMTI Facility Award

VIII. Adjournment

USCIS reverts to 2008 version of naturalization test

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced yesterday it is reverting to the 2008 version of the naturalization civics test beginning March 1, 2021.

On Dec. 1, 2020, USCIS implemented a revised naturalization civics test as part of a decennial test review and update process. USCIS has now determined the 2020 civics test development process, content, testing procedures, and implementation schedule may inadvertently create potential barriers to the naturalization process.

This latest action is consistent with the framework of the Executive Order on Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems, which directs a comprehensive review of the naturalization process to eliminate barriers and make the process more accessible to all eligible individuals.

The 2008 civics test was thoroughly developed over a multi-year period with the input of more than 150 organizations, which included English as a second language experts, educators, and historians, and was piloted before its implementation. USCIS aspires to make the process as accessible as possible as directed by President Joe Biden's request to review the process thoroughly.

The civics test is administered to applicants who apply for U.S. citizenship through naturalization and is one of the statutory requirements for naturalizing. Applicants must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, principles, and form of government of the United States. The decision to naturalize demonstrates an investment in and commitment to this country. USCIS is committed to administering a test that is an instrument of civic learning and fosters civic integration as part of the test preparation process.

Applicants who filed their application for naturalization on or after Dec. 1, 2020, and before March 1, 2021, likely have been studying for the 2020 test; therefore, USCIS will give these applicants the option to take either the 2020 civics test or the 2008 civics test. There will be a transition period where both tests are being offered. The 2020 test will be phased out on April 19, 2021, for initial test takers. Applicants filing on or after March 1, 2021, will take the 2008 civics test.

The test items and study guides can be found on the Citizenship Resource Center on the USCIS website. USCIS has also updated the Policy Manual accordingly; see Volume 12, Part E, English and Civics Testing and Exceptions, Chapter 2, English and Civics Testing. ***(USCIS)***

NMC graduates at the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic

Northern Marianas College graduates are working and making a difference as front-line workers at the Commonwealth Health Center during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When the COVID-19 situation came about, we were assigned to different units to manage the patient flow that might come in because of the COVID-19," said NMC alumna Mayleen Aldan, a nurse working at the hospital's operating room. "At first, I was hesitant to go to these different units, but ended up helping patients in the emergency room and the intensive care unit."

"Although the risk for me was very high of contracting COVID-19, I still gladly accepted the reassignment because it is my goal to care for patients, whether we have a pandemic situation or not. I still have that fear and concerns but with the development of guidelines from experts, I never regret responding to the call. I am still ever willing to continue to be part of the front-line healthcare providers as I did before, now, and will be in the future," Aldan said.

Natasha Quitugua, another NMC graduate who is now a nurse at CHC, said the experience was "challenging."

"My experience as a front-liner during the first wave of the pandemic was challenging but rewarding," said Quitugua. "Still, it made me a nurse who can fight back the virus to protect our community."

According to Quitugua, the nursing instructors at NMC told her and her classmates to never give up, even when the "dark times" come

"They prepared us, as nurses, to deal with the worst-case scenario," Quitugua said. "They trained us to fight fear and obstacles. They educated us to become a wise nurse who can care for ourselves and the community."

Maria Atrero, another NMC graduate turned nurse, also said that NMC helped her in dealing with the pandemic.

2017 NMC Nursing graduate Maria Atrero. NMC

2016 NMC Nursing graduate Mayleen Aldan. NMC

2018 NMC Nursing graduate Natasha Quitugua. NMC

During the time when COVID-19 was newly introduced, I remember always feeling anxious about the status of the hospital," said Atrero. "Still, I learned while at NMC to adapt to my environment. In the field of nursing the environment is always changing, especially with patients and family members coming in and out of the hospital."

Atrero asked that the community in the CNMI adhere to COVID-19 regulations and preventive measures.

"It helps us, your families, and yourself if you're compliant with taking your medications and keeping your health in check," Atrero added. ***(PR)***

Kilili urges youth to register for Congressional Award program

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is inviting people between the ages of 13 ½ and 23 to register for the Congressional Award program.

The Congressional Award is the highest award that students can receive from Congress.

"This award is not a competition, but a journey [toward] self-improvement. Any young person in the Marianas that has the determination to meet their goals in the fields of personal development, voluntary service, physical fitness, and exploration can earn the Congressional Award," said Sablan in a Facebook post.

To help potential applicants get started, Sablan's congressional office will host two virtual sessions on Feb. 25, 2021, and march 4, 2021.

The Feb. 25 session will be tailored to current Congressional Award participants and will be about finding creative, innovative, and safe ways to fulfill your goals during the pandemic.

The March 4 session will provide an overview of the program for new and prospective participants. District staff will walk students through the four program areas, award tiers, registering for the program, and logging your activities.

To learn more about the Congressional Award or to RSVP for these sessions, visit sablan.house.gov/serving-you/congressional-award. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds)
February 24, 2021

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt Arnold I. Palacios, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Marcie M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2019 is available for review. Comments made by the general public should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at 234-9447/7689.

The report will be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, on or before March 15, 2021. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of all HUD-funded programs, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The report is available at the NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review and comment on the plan must contact the Planning Division for arrangements by calling (670) 234-7689/6866 during regular business hours.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman of the Board

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The simple lesson of the Texas blackouts

The details of what went wrong in Texas last week—most likely the biggest forced blackout in U.S. history—will take time to establish. So will exactly what to do about it. But this emergency already underlines something that should've been obvious before. As the growing threat of extreme weather puts vital economic systems at risk, climate resilience needs to be taken much more seriously.

As of early Friday morning, nearly 190,000 homes were still without power as Texas grappled with an unusual weather pattern that sent temperatures plummeting and demand for energy soaring. With the local grid overwhelmed, officials resorted to rolling blackouts that at one point left millions without heat or clean water and led to at least 20 deaths. President Joe Biden has declared an emergency and federal regulators have launched an investigation.

Evidently no one thing went wrong. The failure was systemic and multifaceted. The extreme cold shut down power from fossil fuel and nuclear plants when instruments and pipelines froze. As the problems cascaded through the state's electricity grid, outages due to frozen wind turbines made a small contribution to the losses—though nowhere near as much as critics of renewable energy have claimed. The system as a whole had not been weatherized to the necessary standard.

In Texas, two other factors compounded that basic vulnerability. First, the state has, by design, a relatively self-contained grid. This limits its ability to draw power from elsewhere in emergencies. Second, its lightly regulated energy producers compete vigorously on price, which leads them to economize on maintenance and backup systems. Most of the time, the benefit to consumers is real—cheap power. But the delayed cost of those forgone investments is what consumers are now having to endure.

Texas can't say it had no warning. Severely cold weather caused rotating power shutdowns in 2011, and before that in 1989. Both times, outcry and investigations followed, and calls for generators and supporting infrastructure to be more thoroughly winterized were duly issued. Too little was done.

Investing in resilience is a form of insurance. It costs money, and it's reasonable to ask how much is enough. The cost of guarding against every conceivable climate extremity would be prohibitive, and warm states such as Texas are right to apply different standards of weather resistance than those that make sense in Alaska. But this doesn't excuse policymakers simply turning a blind eye to infrequent yet recurring events that cause massive losses when they happen. And the trade-off gets worse with time. Failing to act on climate change now means that extreme weather is likely to become much more frequent.

The right amount of spending on resilience—the ongoing cost of climate-change insurance—will keep getting bigger year by year until the underlying threat is adequately addressed. Texas' failures are glaring at the moment. But it's by no means the only place that's gambling recklessly on "It will never happen."

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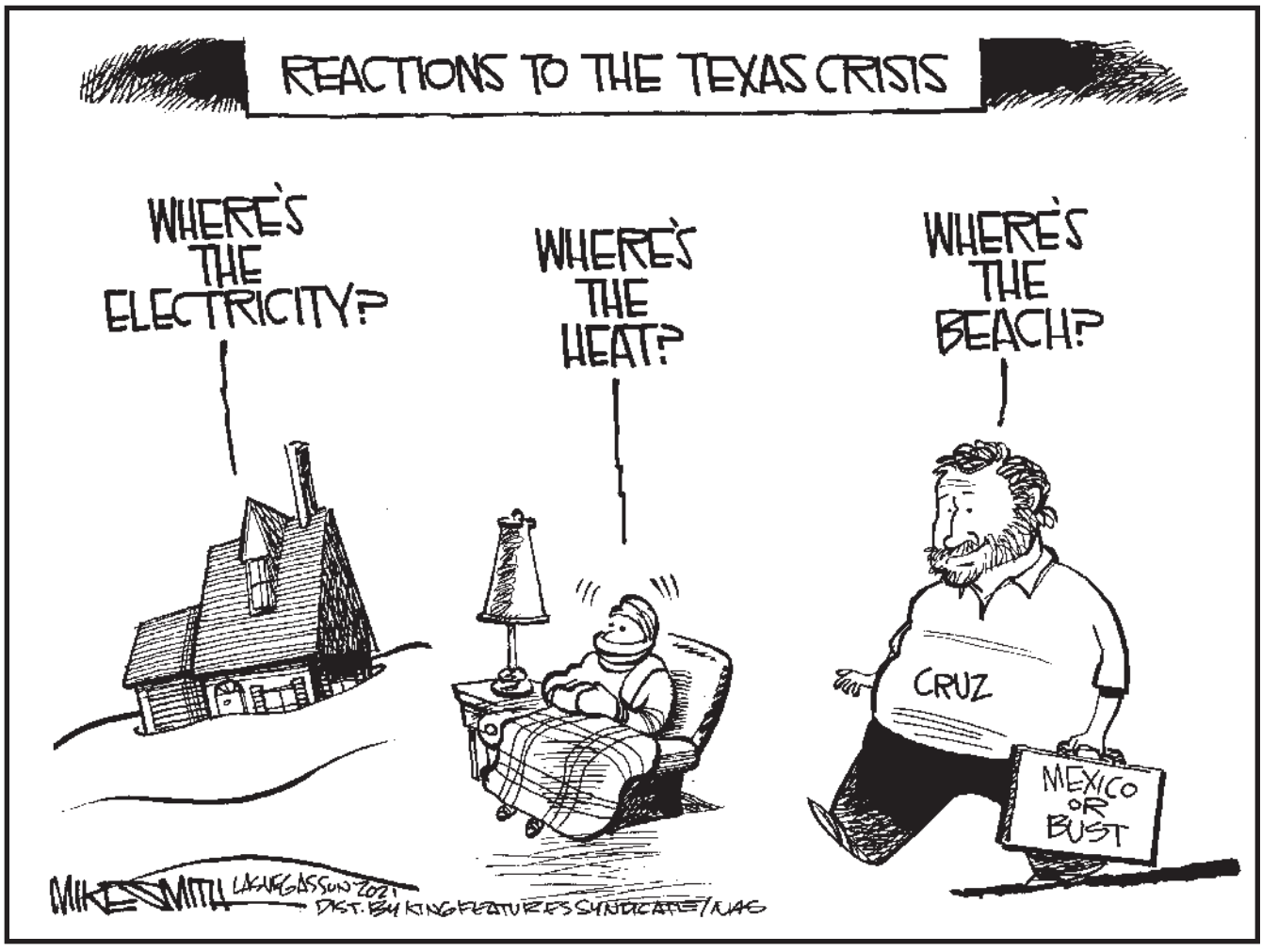

How to end a very long war

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times*. Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

On paper, the United States is committed to withdrawing its last 2,500 troops from Afghanistan less than 10 weeks from now, on May 1. That's under a deal the Trump administration made last year with the Taliban, the Islamic guerrilla group fighting the Kabul government.

But it's far from certain that will happen. Neither the Taliban, the Afghan government nor the United States have kept all their commitments under the year-old agreement. The Taliban promised to reduce attacks on government troops and civilian officials; it hasn't. The Afghan government promised to enter serious peace talks with the Taliban, but it has dragged its feet. The United States promised to begin lifting international sanctions against the Taliban, but when the war escalated and the peace talks deadlocked, the U.S. held back.

Meanwhile, the Taliban has continued pushing the government's underperforming army out of big swaths of territory. And someone—presumably the Taliban—has launched a remorseless campaign of assassinations against judges, journalists and teachers, especially women. The Taliban denies responsibility, but few believe the denial.

As a result, President Joe Biden's path toward ending a war that began three presidents ago has grown more difficult.

Now he faces a decision: Should he withdraw most or all of the troops, as candidate Biden said he wanted, at the risk of seeing Afghanistan descend into a bloodbath?

Should he keep the 2,500 troops in place and announce that they will leave as soon peace negotiations are on track, but not before?

Or, as some former officials argue, should Biden send more troops until a final peace settlement is reached—a potential recipe for an open-ended stay?

It's tempting for war-weary Americans to look at Afghanistan and say: We lost more than 2,400 troops, we spent more than $2 trillion, and we failed; it's time to walk away.

But the United States still has interests in that part of the world, including the containment of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups roaming the region.

After 19 years, it's still worth trying to bring this tragic misadventure to an end in a way that avoids needless damage along the way.

There are three basic options.

One is to stay—and perhaps even make the U.S. military presence a little bigger. That's essentially what a blue-ribbon commission co-chaired by retired Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recommended this month.

"We know what will happen if we leave on 1 May," he warned. "If we walk away, we'll leave behind chaos, if not civil war."

He argued that a continued U.S. military presence is critical to inducing the Taliban to negotiate, since getting foreign forces out of Afghanistan has long been the group's top priority.

At the other end of the spectrum, one of Dunford's former advisors, Afghanistan expert Carter Malkasian, says that it's past time to get out.

"When I look at the costs, leaving now is more compelling than ever before," he told the Washington Post recently. Malkasian argues that keeping U.S. troops in the country is unlikely to persuade the Taliban to enter negotiations as long as they're making gains on the ground, and the presence of 2,500 U.S. troops hasn't stopped that.

But there's also a middle option: Postpone the withdrawal for six months, negotiate a new timetable for the peace talks, and try a more energetic diplomacy (which has come back into style after four years in the wilderness)—including soliciting help from neighboring countries like Russia and China—to press the Taliban to negotiate seriously.

"The peace process is the best option for a decent outcome, even though it's the least likely to succeed," Laurel Miller, a former State Department envoy to Afghanistan, told me. "You need a six-month extension to have any possibility of getting it back on track."

The best U.S. leverage over the rebels isn't its military presence, she said; it's the ability to show them they will be international pariahs if they seize power by force.

"We know that they want to have the sanctions lifted," added Barnett Rubin, another former State Department advisor. "We can begin that process as a positive incentive for negotiations."

The extension should be a one-time experiment, not an open-ended stay, he added. "If it doesn't begin to work by Nov. 1, then we have to leave. And we have to tell people in advance that that's what we're going to do."

That sounds like a sensible answer. After 19 years and more than 2,400 dead, we have no responsibility to continue propping up a government that can't be made to work. But there's still a moral argument for trying to leave the right way—for doing what we can to avoid needless chaos on the way out the door.

Six months is not forever. It might just be enough time to give peace negotiations a chance.

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By RICH LOWRY
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Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Biden is too timid on school reopening

It's an old political trick to make an easily achievable goal sound vauntingly ambitious in order to brag about it when it's inevitably met.

It takes another level of chutzpah, though, to set out as a target something that has already happened.

The press has portrayed President Joe Biden's goal of reopening the majority of K-12 schools in his first 100 days as so far-reaching that the timeline might have to be extended.

Enter White House press secretary Jen Psaki, who explained on Tuesday that the administration defines a school as open if it holds in-classroom instruction at least once a week.

By this metric, the goal isn't really having more than half of schools open—it's having more than half of schools still 80% closed.

Not only is this a ridiculous standard, schools have already cleared the bar. According to Burbio, which runs a school-opening tracker, about two-thirds of K-12 students are attending in-person or hybrid schools.

This goalpost moving exemplifies how the Biden team isn't pushing nearly hard enough on school reopening.

The issue has gone from being something of a red vs. blue battle line last year to a cross-partisan area of consensus. In intellectual and moral terms, the debate over reopening schools has been won, but political progress has been slow, mainly because powerful teachers unions are standing in the way.

If Biden wanted to add a touch of unity to his governing agenda, he'd call out the unions for being an obstacle to educational and economic progress at a challenging time for the country.

The science is clear enough, if that matters.

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wrote in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "There has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission."

This makes the costs of school closures and remote learning all the harder to bear.

A McKinsey estimate from June concluded that students may have lost three months to a year of learning, depending on the exact circumstances. Then, there are the social costs for children, among them higher rates of depression and anxiety.

School closures have pulled women out of the labor force to bear the brunt of all the juggling that has to go on at home.

Nonetheless, teacher unions have fought reopening and helped stymie reopening in cities and blue states. Most schools in California have been remote. Elementary schools reopened in New York, but not middle schools or high schools.

School districts in the Washington, D.C., region are floating a parodic solution to reopening—have kids return to the classroom so they can gather to watch remote teachers on computer screens.

Somehow private schools have largely managed to stay open, in part, because if they don't, no one gets paid.

In contrast, public school teachers are in a position to make demands even to consider coming back and doing their jobs.

After intense lobbying by the unions, most states have put teachers near the front of the line for vaccines (even though Biden's CDC director has said teacher vaccination isn't necessary for reopening).

As David Zweig points out in a piece at Wired, many union officials still insist that even vaccination won't guarantee a return to the classroom. This would be like surgeons demanding to be vaccinated, then not showing up for operations anyway.

The Biden team contends that more spending is necessary for reopening. Biden is proposing another $130 billion in education funding in his COVID-19 bill, but as Dan Lips of the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity notes, states still have tens of billions in unspent funds from last year's relief packages.

No, this is a question of political will. Biden's goal should be to exert every ounce of influence that he has to get kids back in the classroom—for their own good and that of the country's parents.

In a state that once sang 'Freeze a Yankee,' the myth of an invincible Texas crumbles

By BUD KENNEDY
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Bud Kennedy is a columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Forty years ago, Texans felt so indestructible that we sang along when a Dallas radio station played "Freeze a Yankee":

Cut off the gas, turn off the oil
And let 'em all freeze and boil

After the most costly storm in state history destroyed homes, businesses, cities and lives, songwriter Bob Arnold of Dallas said last week was "just completely embarrassing" for Texas.

"Now the Yankees are not freezing—we are," he said.

Texas' pinchpenny failure to prepare for decennial winter storms, along with state bureaucrats' grossly lazy oversight of energy companies, put another giant dent in the myth of an invincible Texas.

"Nobody wants to spend a lot of money, and now that's come to bear fruit," said Arnold, a former energy company spokesman who co-wrote the 1979 lyrics for his folk group, the Folkel Minority, a spinoff from the Vocal Majority chorus:

We gonna keep all the gas we can make
And let them Yankees shiver 'n' shake

"Back then, there were so many states that didn't want drilling—they expected Texas to do that," Arnold said.

"It doesn't do us any good if we can't run the power plants."

If you thought the last week was the end of the nightmare, think again.

Both years Texas had record winter cold—1899 and 1949—they were followed by deadly floods.

In 1899, the coldest winter on record was followed by 12 straight days of rain that June, inundating Waco, Belton and much of central Texas along the Brazos and Colorado rivers.

In Fort Worth, the low temperature last week was 2 below zero. That matched a chilly low Jan. 31, 1949.

Three months later—barely time to recover—more than 10 inches of rain turned the Trinity River into a sea 14 blocks wide.

The 1949 flood killed 10 people and pushed 13,000 people out of their waterlogged homes.

I didn't think of that. The official Texas state climatologist did.

The 1949 storm was the only cold snap that brought as much snow and ice statewide as this one, according to John Nielsen-Gammon of the Texas Center For Climate at Texas A&M University.

"This combination of extreme cold and heavy winter precipitation is a lot more rare than just cold temperatures alone," he said.

Think about it. Usually when it's bitterly cold, it's also dry.

"This whole storm was so unusual," he said.

He's sticking with his prediction for warmer temperatures over the next two decades, including winters where temperatures with rise by an average of 1.6 degrees.

A former state lawmaker, Ron Simmons of Carrollton, cited Nielsen-Gammon's study of "extreme weather" as a reason past Texas Legislatures didn't require power plants to winterize.

Climate change makes events like last week less likely, not more likely, Nielson-Gammon said.

Yes, we get more hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes and drought. But there's no indication that we are getting more extreme cold or winter storms.

Jennifer Francis, an Arctic climate-change scientist at the Massachusetts-based Woodwell Climate Research Center, agreed that we can expect fewer record cold spells.

But she didn't let Texas leaders off the hook.

She wrote by email: "Lawmakers chose to ignore the chorus of scientists who warned that extreme events like this one will still happen, thus leaving millions of people and basic infrastructure vulnerable to damaging impacts of severe weather like this."

They ignored us right up to the storm.

We knew this storm was coming more than a week ahead. Yet nobody in state or local government even warned anyone not to run their car inside a garage, or not to bring a grill inside, or how to turn off city water or prepare for utility outages.

"It's very disappointing that decision-makers in government and utility companies, as well as individuals, did not take the warnings more seriously," Francis wrote.

Our lawmakers and leaders left us all in the dark.

Conquering hunger in the United States

By KATIE S. MARTIN
Progressive Media Project

Katie S. Martin is the executive director of the Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions at Connecticut Food Bank-Foodshare, and the author of Reinventing Food Banks and Pantries: New Tools to End Hunger, *Island Press, 2021. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by* The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

As the pandemic throws millions of Americans out of work, cars line up for miles outside food banks across the country. COVID-19 did not create the crisis of hunger in the United States, but it has exposed its root cause. Hint: it's not a shortage of food.

Even before the pandemic, 35 million Americans were food insecure, meaning they were not able to access and afford enough nutritious food for their families. And many more people were one or two paychecks away from needing help.

In a 2018 survey, the Federal Reserve found that 40% of Americans could not afford to pay an unexpected $400 bill. When businesses were forced to shut down, this lack of financial cushion created an economic shock and a dramatic increase in food insecurity. Feeding America estimates that in 2020, some 50 million Americans—one in seven—suffered from food insecurity.

Let's be clear: the reason we have massive lines at food bank distributions is not because we have a shortage of food supplies. Yes, in the early days of the pandemic we faced short-term shortages when people stockpiled nonperishables and toilet paper. But we have a robust food supply that rebounded quickly to respond to the need.

Millions of Americans are hungry because they lack the means to pay for food.

During COVID-19, we have awakened to racial injustices and systemic inequalities that put certain groups of people at greater risk for losing their jobs, contracting the virus and becoming food insecure. Black and Latinx Americans are more likely than whites to work in low-wage service industries, and are more likely to lose their jobs due to COVID-19. People of color, particularly women, were already the most at risk for food insecurity, financial instability and health disparities prior to COVID-19.

Despite decades of providing charitable food from regional food banks and local food pantries, food insecurity remains a persistent public health problem that the pandemic has only exacerbated.

Food banks have risen to the occasion and are addressing the immediate need for food. To tackle the root causes of food insecurity, however, we need both public and private responses.

We need a stronger government safety net that includes not just federal food assistance, but a minimum wage that enables workers to afford food, housing and other basic needs. We need the business sector to step up, not only with charitable donations, but by paying living wages with benefits so their employees don't need to rely on charitable food.

There is light at the end of this dark tunnel. Vaccines are rolling out, businesses are beginning to reopen, spring is around the corner and President Joe Biden has signed executive orders to reduce food insecurity during COVID-19.

Importantly, the Biden administration has demonstrated its willingness to tackle the root causes of hunger by proposing a $15 minimum wage. The federal rate of $7.25 has not budged since 2009, which helps explain the financial devastation experienced by millions of low-wage workers during the pandemic, including many essential workers.

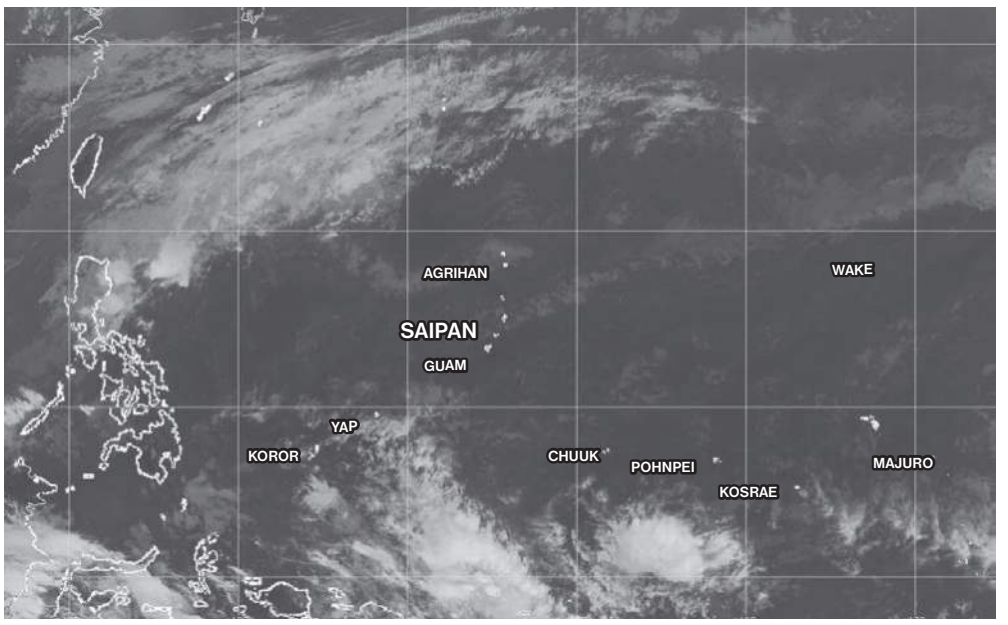
Let's use this extraordinary moment in history to reduce systemic inequalities and ensure that all Americans can afford enough food. Americans are hungry for change.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.
86° 76°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:10 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Weather remains mainly dry across the region this morning, but satellite shows some light trade-wind showers. Trade winds are generally moderate, and seas at the buoys are a little under 6 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	6:23 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:23 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	6:24 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	6:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:58 AM	3:27 PM
Thursday	-	4:50 AM	4:26 PM
Friday	-	5:41 AM	5:25 PM
Saturday	-	6:28 AM	6:24 PM
Sunday	-	7:14 AM	7:22 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	75° / 63°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	37° / 18°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	63° / 57°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	78° / 68°
London	Sunny	82° / 54°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	79° / 56°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	84° / 73°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 70°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 70°
New York	Mixed	43° / 28°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	43° / 28°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	37° / 27°
Busan	Sunny	43° / 28°
Rome	Rain	54° / 43°
Salem	Thunderstorms	67° / 40°
San Francisco	Sunny	69° / 49°
Seoul	Sunny	34° / 18°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	43° / 28°
Washington, DC	Rain	46° / 28°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
7:01 AM	High Tide	1.59
12:06 PM	Low Tide	1.11
4:50 PM	High Tide	1.58
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

CouplesCakery: Custom cakes and more

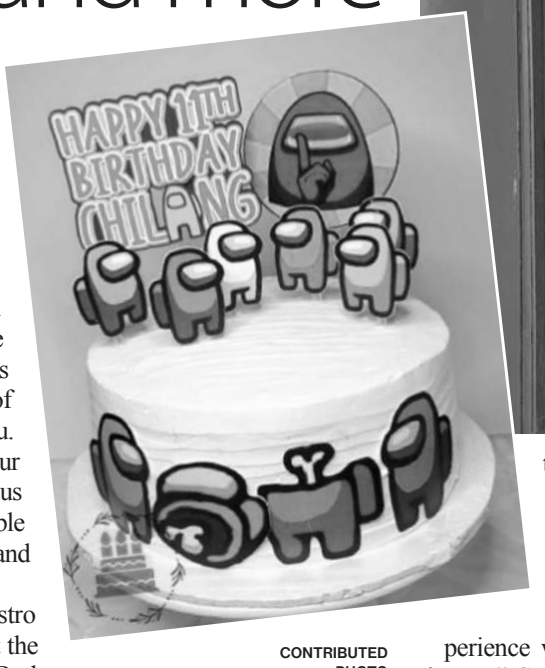
By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

CouplesCakery is the brainchild of baking couple powerhouse Norissa San Nicolas Camacho and Donovan Jose P. Castro. They started selling cakes through social media in 2019 and last month, formally opened a place located at Kada Dia in Chalan Kanoa where their customers can physically be present to place an order and also see items that are readily available.

"We are both passionate with the craft of baking so we decided to open shop and be the first powerhouse couple in baking. We do everything as a couple—we create and bake together and it's always a team effort… This is our first collaboration as partners and the word 'cakery' came up because we specialize in customized cake designs, any dessert that is cake-driven, and we are also known for our cupcakes," Camacho said.

"Last year, we were getting more customers and our base was growing so we felt the need to open a shop so we can provide a selection of baked goods to our customers instead of just ordering from a menu. We felt very limited with our social media platform versus now in Kada Dia, we are able to expand our products and flavors," Camacho added.

Both Camacho and Castro are former pastry chefs at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Both are highly trained in the culinary arts. Camacho trained in Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts in Las Vegas, while Castro is a graduate of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute in Lower Base, Saipan. Both are from the cooking side but when they put their hands into pastry making, there was no turning back.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
An Among Us custom birthday cake by CouplesCakery.

"Aside from custom-made cakes, our specialties include 'Ice Box' cheesecake, 'No Bake' Mango Cheesecake, panna cotta in coffee or bay leaves flavor, lantizas, we highlight a 'cake of day' in the shop that is already sliced and in a container, and our cupcakes are also popular and the flavor varies depending on the season but we have the classic chocolate and vanilla flavors as staples," Castro said.

"We also serve two kinds of iced tea drinks on island—green and peach. Our signature iced coffee also goes well with any of our cakes and pastries. We live by our hashtag 'we bake a difference' as we want the community to have a new experience when it comes to dessert," Castro added.

BEA CABRERA
CouplesCakery owned by Norissa San Nicolas Camacho and Donovan P. Castro, is now open to serve at Kada Dia in Chalan Kanoa.

CouplesCakery also has dessert packages for special occasions like weddings, birthdays, etc. With them around to help you with your simplest or out-of-this-world idea for a cake, Camacho and Castro can make it come true just order ahead of time. "People that I have worked with in the pastry department know that I have a sweet tooth and when I know a dessert is good, I immediately say 'oh my! Where did you get this?' I want the same feeling from people to have that have tried any of our items or baked goods. I want them to leave with a feeling that they tasted something new, delicious that will make them come back for more," Camacho said.

"This is a dream come true for Norissa and I. It is very rewarding every day. We wake up, make products together, and have people try and come back to get what we create is euphoric and motivates us to wake up every morning to do more… we always have a good variety for everybody," Castro said

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A Coca-Cola custom birthday cake by CouplesCakery.

CouplesCakery is open Monday-Saturday, from 10am to 4pm. For more information, call (670) 989-7010 email: 670couplecakery@gmail.com or look them up on Instagram: CouplesCakery.

Boeing: 777s with engine that blew apart should be grounded

Boeing has recommended that airlines ground all 777s with the type of engine that blew apart after takeoff from Denver this past weekend, and most carriers that fly those planes said they would temporarily pull them from service.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration ordered United Airlines to step up inspections of the aircraft after one of its flights made an emergency landing at Denver International Airport on Saturday as pieces of the engine's casing rained on suburban neighborhoods. None of the 231 passengers or 10 crew were hurt, and the flight landed safely, authorities said. United is among the carriers that has grounded the planes.

FAA Administrator Steve Dickson identified the focus on the stepped-up inspections as hollow fan blades unique to the Pratt & Whitney PW4000 engine model and used solely on Boeing 777s. Dickson's statement said the conclusion was based on an initial review of safety data and would likely mean grounding some planes.

Robert Sumwalt, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said during a virtual news conference Monday night that a fractured fan blade found in the engine had visible signs of "damage consistent with metal fatigue." The broken blade hit and fractured the blade next to it as the engine broke apart, according to a preliminary investigation.

Sumwalt said the blade that fractured first was being flown on a private jet to Pratt & Whitney's headquarters Monday night to be examined under the supervision of NTSB investigators.

"Our mission is to understand not only what happened, but why it happened, so that we can keep it from happening again," he said.

Boeing said there were 69 777s with the Pratt & Whitney 4000-112 engines in service and another 59 in storage and affirmed they should be grounded until the FAA sets up an inspection regime.

United had 24 of the planes in service; it is the only U.S. airline with the engine in its fleet, according to the FAA.

Two Japanese airlines have another 32. Japan ordered the planes out of service, according to the financial newspaper Nikkei, while noting that an engine in the same family had trouble in December.

In South Korea, Asiana Airlines grounded nine, seven of which were in service, and Korean Air said it grounded 16 aircraft, six of which are in service. ***(AP)***

Supreme Court won't halt turnover of Trump's tax records

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a significant defeat for former President Donald Trump, the Supreme Court on Monday declined to step in to halt the turnover of his tax records to a New York state prosecutor.

The court's action is the apparent culmination of a lengthy legal battle that had already reached the high court once before.

Trump's tax records are not supposed to become public as part of prosecutors' criminal investigation, but the high court's action is a blow to Trump because he has long fought on so many fronts to keep his tax records shielded from view. The ongoing investigation that the records are part of could also become an issue for Trump in his life after the presidency.

In a statement, the Trump blasted prosecutors and said the "Supreme Court never should have let this 'fishing expedition' happen, but they did." The Republican claimed the investigation is politically motivated by Democrats in "a totally Democrat location, New York City and State." And he said he would "fight on" and that "We will win!"

The Supreme Court waited months to act in the case. The last of the written briefs in the case was filed Oct. 19. But a court that includes three Trump appointees waited through the election, Trump's challenge to his defeat and a month after Trump left office before issuing its order.

The court offered no explanation for the delay, and the legal issue before the justices did not involve whether Trump was due any special deference because he was president.

The court's order is a win for Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., who has been seeking Trump's tax records since 2019 as part of an investigation. Vance, a Democrat, had subpoenaed the records from the Mazars accounting firm that has long done work for Trump and his businesses. Mazars has said it would comply with the subpoena, but Trump sued to block the records' release.

Vance's office had said it would be free to enforce the subpoena and obtain the records in the event the Supreme Court declined to step in and halt the records' turnover, but it was unclear when that might happen. In a three-word statement Monday, Vance said only: "The work continues."

The court's action Monday wasn't the only defeat for Trump, the court also declined to get involved in a handful of cases related to the 2020 election.

The records Vance has been after are more than eight years of Trump's personal and corporate tax records. Vance has disclosed little about what prompted him to seek them. In one court filing last year, however, prosecutors said they were justified in demanding the records because of public reports of "possibly extensive and protracted criminal conduct at the Trump Organization."

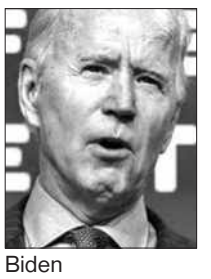
Nation

A Biden edge in COVID-19 bill: Dems reluctant to wound him

WASHINGTON (AP)—Democratic leaders have a potent dynamic on their side as Congress preps for its first votes on the party's $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill: Would any Democrat dare cast the vote that scuttles new President Joe Biden's leadoff initiative?

Democrats' thin 10-vote House majority leaves little room for defections in the face of solid Republican opposition, and they have none in a 50-50 Senate they control only with Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote. Internal Democratic disputes remain over raising the minimum wage, how much aid to funnel to struggling state and local governments and whether to extend emergency unemployment benefits another month.

Yet with the House Budget Committee advancing the 591-page package Monday, Democrats across the party's spectrum show little indication they're willing to embarrass Biden with a high-profile defeat a month into his presidency.


Biden

Such a setback would deal early blows to Biden, new Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and California Democrat Nancy Pelosi in what could be her last term as House speaker. It could also wound congressional Democrats overall by risking repercussions in the 2022 elections if they fail to unite effectively against clear enemies like the pandemic and the frozen economy.

"You think very seriously before casting a deciding vote against your own party's president's legislative agenda," said Ian Russell, a Democratic consultant. But he cautioned that lawmakers must decide "for themselves how their vote is going to play out" at home.

The issue that's provoked the deepest divisions is a progressive-led drive to boost the federal minimum wage to $15 hourly over five years. The current $7.25 minimum took effect in 2009.

"It was the No. 1 priority for progressives," Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said in an interview last week. "This is something we've run on and something we've promised to the American people."

An overall relief bill, including the minimum wage boost, is expected to clear the House, and likely the Senate as well. But the minimum wage boost's fate is shaky in the Senate, where Joe Manchin of West Virginia, perhaps the chamber's most conservative Democrat, has said $15 is too expensive. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., has suggested she might oppose it, too.

More ominously, the Senate parliamentarian is expected to rule soon on whether the minimum wage provision must be tossed from the bill. Under expedited procedures Democrats are using, items that aren't principally budget-related can't be included, and it's unclear if Democrats would have the votes to overturn such a decision.

Garland vows sharp focus on Capitol riot as attorney general

WASHINGTON (AP)—Merrick Garland, President Joe Biden's attorney general nominee, vowed Monday to prioritize combating extremist violence with an initial focus on the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol as he sought to assure lawmakers that the Justice Department would remain politically independent on his watch.

A federal appeals court judge who was snubbed by Republicans for a seat on the Supreme Court in 2016, Garland is now among Biden's most widely supported nominees, putting him on track for a quick confirmation potentially within days. He will inherit a Justice Department that endured a tumultuous era under former president Donald Trump—rife with political drama and controversial decisions—and that faced abundant criticism from Democrats over what they saw as the politicizing of the nation's top law enforcement agencies.

Garland sought repeatedly Monday to assure members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that he would stay above the fray of politics. He emphasized that he had never spoken to Biden about the federal tax investigation into his son, Hunter Biden, and pledged to resign as attorney general if needed to stand up to the White House—though he said he didn't expect that would be necessary "with this president."

"I have grown pretty immune to any kind of pressure, other than the pressure to do what I think is the right thing, given the facts and the law. That is what I intend to do as the attorney general," Garland said. "I don't care who pressures me in whatever direction."

The positive reception for Garland illustrated that senators are ready to move forward after his name became synonymous with a bitter, four year partisan battle over Supreme Court nominations during the Trump presidency. But while praising Garland for his record and his temperament, Republicans who denied Garland a seat on the high court made clear that they will not give him a free pass if he is confirmed as attorney general.

In Texas, attention turns to storm repairs, political peril

Handyman Roberto Valerio works on repairing a broken pipe beneath the sink in the home of Nora Espinoza, on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, in Dallas. The pipe broke during freezing temperatures brought by last week's winter weather. AP

DALLAS (AP)—The seam that split in a pipe under Nora Espinoza's sink during the frigid cold that gripped Texas was narrower than the edge of a dime.

Her kitchen appeared mostly undamaged, but the plumber that cut into Espinoza's wall found water had been pouring in underneath the floor. She expects the repairs to cost $15,000.

Espinoza, a 56-year-old Dallas resident, is among those still getting a sense of the wreckage left by the icy blast that hit Texas and much of the Deep South last week, knocking out power to millions and contributing to nearly 80 deaths. Soaked drywall and carpet is being pulled back to give a fuller view of the destruction, and the political peril for elected leaders and energy officials who were unable to keep the heat on in places unaccustomed to freezing cold.

Snow and ice melted across Texas over the weekend, but plumbers are still racing from home to home to patch uncounted stretches of burst pipe. Many residents are unsure when they'll be able to make permanent repairs, what they'll have to pay out of pocket or even when they'll be able to go home.

Roberto Valerio, a plumber in North Texas, said the broken pipes and other problems caused by the storm had led to "big chaos."

"We can't find what we need easily," he said. "There's a great shortage of supplies."

In the Houston area, officials on Monday announced they have set up a relief fund to help cover the cost of repairs and temporary housing for vulnerable families. Gov. Greg Abbott has indicated his fiercely independent state needs help. His office encouraged out-of-state plumbers to come fix Texas pipes.

For Espinoza, who said her home dropped to 38 degrees Fahrenheit (3.33 degrees Celsius) before the power was restored and the pipe burst Friday, it's far too little, far too late

"Your job is to protect us. That's why we voted you in," Espinoza said of Abbott as she fought tears while waiting for a plumber. "My pipes would have never burst, never, if I had power."

A rushing sound could be heard in Espinoza's kitchen Saturday night, when Valerio turned the water back on. He made temporary repairs, but it'll be weeks before he can come back to do more work and determine whether the floor needs to be replaced.

School testing can be delayed but not canceled, feds say

The Education Department said Monday that it will not allow states to forgo federally required standardized testing in schools this year but will give them flexibility to delay testing or hold it online during the pandemic.

Aiming for a middle ground in a polarized debate, the Biden administration said states must continue with annual testing but can apply to be exempted from certain accountability measures tied to the results.

States also will be allowed to move tests to the summer or fall, or they can offer shortened tests or online assessments.

In a letter to state education chiefs on Monday, Ian Rosenblum, an acting assistant education secretary, said testing will help schools understand the impact of the pandemic and how to help students.

"In addition, parents need information on how their children are doing," he said.

The move aligns with proposals from Democrats who have pushed for testing to identify and address learning setbacks, but who say schools should not be penalized for falling short of goals. But it was blasted by Republicans and by some teachers unions.

The American Federation of Teachers, one of the nation's major teachers unions, called it a "frustrating turn." Randi Weingarten, the union's president, said federal tests should have been canceled and replaced by locally created evaluations.

"We have always known that standardized tests are not the best way to measure a child's development, nor do they particularly help kids or inform best practices for teaching and learning," Weingarten said. "That is especially true in these unprecedented times."

States including New York and Michigan previously said they would apply to be waived from testing this year, and several other states signaled plans to follow. Republicans in Congress also opposed testing and called for a blanket exemption for all states.

Federal law requires states to test students each year in subjects including math and reading as a way to gauge schools' progress and to identify learning disparities among different groups of students.

Asia

AFTER JUNTA RAISES SPECTER OF FORCE

Protests swell in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Protesters gathered in Myanmar's biggest city on Monday despite the ruling junta's threat to use lethal force against people who join a general strike against the military's takeover three weeks ago.

More than 1,000 protesters gathered near the U.S. Embassy in Yangon despite barriers blocking the way, but left to avoid a confrontation after 20 military trucks with riot police arrived nearby. Protests continued in other parts of the city, including next to Sule Pagoda, a traditional gathering point.

Factories, workplaces and shops were shuttered across the country Monday in response to the call for a nationwide strike. The closings extended to the capital, Naypyitaw.

The junta had warned against a general strike in a public announcement Sunday night on state television broadcaster MRTV.

"It is found that the protesters have raised their incitement towards riot and anarchy mob on the day of 22 February. Protesters are now inciting the people, especially emotional teenagers and youths, to a confrontation path where they will suffer the loss of life," the onscreen text said in English, replicating the spoken announcement in Burmese.

The junta's statement also blamed criminals for past protest violence, with the result that "the security force members had to fire back." Three protesters have been fatally shot.

Trucks cruised the streets of Yangon on Sunday night, blaring similar warnings.

The protest movement, which seeks to restore power to the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and have her and other leaders released from detention, has embraced nonviolence.

The nationwide strike was dubbed Five-Twos, for the five number twos in the numeric form of Monday's date.

"I am joining the 22222 nationwide protest as a citizen of the country. We must join the protest this time without fail," said 42-year-old Zayar, who owns a bottled water business in the capital. "So I've closed down my factory and joined the demonstration."

Zin Mi Mi Aung, a 27-year-old saleswoman, also joined the strike.

"We don't want to be governed by the regime," she said as people marched and chanted behind her. "We will fight against them until we win."

Thousands of people gathered in the capital's wide boulevards, many on motorbikes to allow swift movement in the event of any police action.

Reports and photos of protests in at least a dozen cities and towns were posted on social media. Overhead views, some shot from drones, showed massive crowds in six cities appearing to number in the tens of thousands.

There were pictures of a particularly colorful event in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan state, where scores of small red hot-air balloons were set aloft. A bigger one was adorned with a drawing of the three-finger salute adopted by the anti-coup movement. The city is famous for its annual hot-air balloon festival.

In Pyinmana, a satellite town of Naypyitaw, police chased people through the streets to arrest them. Reports on social media, including from worried family members, said police had arrested 200 people or more, mostly young people, and sent them to a military base. If confirmed, it would be the biggest mass arrest since the protests started.

The general strike was an extension of actions called by the Civil Disobedience Movement, a loosely organized group that has been encouraging civil servants and workers at state enterprises to walk off their jobs. Many transport workers and white collar workers have responded to the appeal.

Fukushima nuclear plant operator: Seismometers were broken

TOKYO (AP)—The operator of the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant said Monday that two seismometers at one of its three melted reactors have been out of order since last year and did not collect data when a powerful earthquake struck the area earlier this month.

The acknowledgement raised new questions about whether the company's risk management has improved since a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011 destroyed much of the plant.

The malfunctioning seismometers surfaced during a Nuclear Regulation Authority meeting on Monday to discuss new damage at the plant resulting from a magnitude 7.3 quake that struck the region on Feb. 13. Cooling water and pressure levels fell in the Unit 1 and 3 reactors, indicating additional damage to their primary containment chambers.

The operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., has repeatedly been criticized for coverups and delayed disclosures of problems at the plant.

Regulatory officials asked TEPCO at the meeting why it did not have seismological data from the Unit 3 reactor for Saturday's quake, and utility officials acknowledged that both of its seismometers had failed—one in July and the other in October—and had never been repaired.

TEPCO also said that seismometers at all but two of the reactor buildings that survived the 2011 disaster were submerged by water from the tsunami and have never been replaced.

During Monday's meeting, regulatory officials said they were concerned about the declining water levels and pressure in the Unit 1 and 3 primary containment chambers because of the possibility that the quake had expanded the existing damage or opened new leakage paths, and urged the utility to closely check for any increased radiation levels in the ground water surrounding the reactor buildings.

TEPCO said no abnormality has been detected in water samples so far.

New damage could further complicate the plant's already difficult decommissioning process and add to the large amounts of contaminated water being stored at the plant.

Since the 2011 disaster, cooling water has been escaping constantly from the damaged primary containment vessels into the basements of reactor and turbine buildings, where the volume increases as groundwater seeps in. The water is pumped up and treated, then part of it is reused as cooling water, while the rest is stored in about 1,000 tanks.

TEPCO initially reported there was no abnormality at the plant from Saturday's earthquake. But on Monday, it said about 20 of the tanks had slid slightly due to the quake, a storage container carrying radioactive waste had tilted, and asphalt pavement at the plant was cracked.

World

AMID FEARS PANDEMIC MAY REBOUND

Germany reopens some schools

BERLIN (AP)—Elementary students in more than half of Germany's 16 states returned to school Monday after more than two months at home, the first major relaxation of the country's pandemic measures since before Christmas.

AP

Pupils attend a lesson at the 'Russee' elementary school in Kiel, northern Germany, Monday, Feb. 22, 2021.

Kindergartens also reopened their doors for pre-school children, giving much-anticipated relief to stressed parents trying to juggle working from home and childcare during the lockdown.

The move was agreed at a meeting between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and state governors two weeks ago, and stuck to despite signs that the decline in case numbers seen in the country is flattening out again and even rising in some areas.

Education Minister Anja Karliczek has defended the decision to reopen schools, saying younger children in particular benefit from learning together in groups.

Schools should use "all available means to prevent virus transmission," Karliczek told German news agency dpa, expressing confidence that state education officials who are in charge of school matters in Germany would consider the infection numbers when deciding where to reopen.

Germany's disease control agency says there were 4,369 newly confirmed cases and 62 deaths in the past day, though Monday's numbers are often low due to reporting delays at the weekend.

The spread of more contagious virus variants has caused particular concern in Germany.

Government spokesman Steffen Seibert noted that a recent review of positive tests found that the variant first detected in Britain is now present in almost a quarter of all cases.

"In general, experts expect that ... the next measurement will result in a higher figure," he told reporters in Berlin.

Elementary school students in Berlin and elsewhere are required to wear masks in class and some will continue to do part of their schooling from home, to help reduce class sizes. Officials have pledged to install air filtration devices in all classrooms. So far that effort hasn't progressed very far and teachers instead have to regularly open windows to avoid stale, potentially virus-laden air from building up.

Education officials and Germany's health minister agreed Monday that teachers in primary and special needs schools, and kindergarten staff, will be given greater priority in getting vaccinations.

Haiti's president: Despite coup attempts he backs democracy

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Haiti's president blamed powerful oligarchs on Monday for seven attempts in his four-year term to overthrow Haiti's democratic system, most recently an attempted coup on Feb. 7, but said he remains committed to democracy.

Jovenel Moise defended his use of decrees--recently retiring three supreme court judges and appointing their replacements. He said he had to take off his "gloves" to fight against organized crime, rampant insecurity and kidnapping instigated by the oligarchs.

Nonetheless, he told a virtual meeting of the U.N. Security Council that "we see the democratic regime and elections are the only way to have access to power."

The president spoke after U.N. special envoy for Haiti, Helen La Lime, told members that efforts by part of the opposition to unseat Moise on Feb. 7, as well as the president's actions reacting to the alleged coup attempt and a senior judge's announcement of his appointment as interim head of state, "have further hardened the positions of the principal actors in the political crisis that has for too long affected the lives of the Haitian population."

"As the country prepares to enter a tense pre-electoral period, the polarization that has defined most of president Moise's term in office has become even more acute," she said, pointing to shrinking civic space and an alarming and deteriorating humanitarian situation.

La Lime also cited the Feb. 14 peaceful demonstration in the capital Port-au-Prince by some 3,000 demonstrators "to denounce what they deem to be a looming risk of return to authoritarian rule."

The opposition claims that Moïse's five-year term ended on Feb. 7, but Moïse has reiterated that it ends in February 2022 since he wasn't sworn in until 2017. Prior to that, a provisional president ruled Haiti for one year following chaotic elections marred by allegations of fraud.

Moise has repeatedly said he will step down in February 2022 and has called for legislative and presidential elections to be held Sept. 19, with a runoff scheduled for Nov. 21.

Critics accuse Moïse of amassing more power in recent months, noting that he already had been ruling by presidential decree ever since he dissolved the majority of Parliament in January 2020 after failing to hold legislative elections in 2019 amid political gridlock.

Moise countered that the government faces "an enemy which is powerful and has a great deal of means."

He said his administration put in place an economic system "to stop the systematic pillaging by our authorities to the detriment of our people" but the oligarchs didn't want reforms or change so he instituted reforms in the utility sector and purchase of petrol, and dismantled 64 of the 100 existing gangs the oligarchs support.

Good Housekeeping

GRETCHEN MCKAY/POST-GAZETTE/TNS

A grain bowl with roasted veggies and lemon-garlic salmon is a great way to kick off fish Fridays for Lent.

GRETCHEN'S TABLE:

Lemon-garlic salmon farro bowl

By GRETCHEN MCKAY
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

The Lenten season is upon us, and that means observers are eating fish on Fridays.

If you're a fan of church fish fries, you're probably going to have to content yourself with cod, as many parishes are drastically scaling back their menus because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But if a nice piece of salmon beckons instead, try this recipe. It's simple and healthy, bringing together farro, roasted vegetables and salmon baked in a zesty lemon-garlic sauce.

Yes, the recipe has several components, but that's no reason to fret. Each can be made up to a day in advance and then assembled when it's time to eat. Or, roast the fish and veggies while you're cooking the farro. It just depends on whether you want to serve the bowls warm, chilled or at room temperature.

If you don't like farro, substitute any favorite grain—white or brown rice, quinoa, bulgar or wheat berries all work. I built the bowl on a bed of mixed kale, mustard and baby greens.

Unless you like to drown your bowls in dressing, you'll end up with a fair amount of leftover lemon-garlic sauce. That's a good thing, as it can be used to dress salads, drizzle over roasted chicken or as a dipping sauce for just about anything.

LEMON-GARLIC SALMON FARRO BOWL

PG tested

For lemon-garlic sauce
- Zest and juice of l large lemon
- 2 tablespoons lemon-infused or regular olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

For salmon
- 1 pound boneless, skinless salmon fillet
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- For farro bowl
- 1 cup farro, cooked according to package directions
- 2 sweet potatoes, diced or cut into half moons
- 1/2 bunch thin asparagus, woody ends snapped off and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups mixed salad greens

For lemon-yogurt dressing
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon rice wine or champagne vinegar
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup plain whole milk Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons lemon-infused or regular extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of fresh chopped dill

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Make lemon-garlic sauce by whisking together lemon juice and zest, olive oil, minced garlic, and oregano in a medium bowl. Add a good grind of black pepper and whisk again.

Line a cookie sheet with a large piece of foil. Brush a little olive oil over the surface.

Pat salmon fillet(s) dry with a paper towel, then season on both sides with salt. Place on top of foil, and drizzle lemon-garlic sauce on top. Fold the foil over the fish to create a package.

Prepare veggies: Place diced or sliced sweet potatoes, asparagus and tomatoes in a large bowl, pour remaining lemon-garlic sauce over top and toss to coat. Place on a second cookie sheet, and season with salt and pepper. Place in oven, and roast until the veggies are fork tender and tomatoes have started to burst, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from oven, and cover with foil to keep warm.

Place fish in the oven, and bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until salmon is almost cooked through at the thickest part. (Time will vary depending on how thick the fillet is.) Meanwhile, stir together the dressing ingredients in a medium bowl.

Remove fish from oven and open up the foil to uncover the top of the fish. Turn oven to broil.

Broil fish for 3 to 5 minutes, watching closely so it doesn't burn. Salmon is done when the top is starting to brown and has a slightly crusty texture.

Remove fish from oven, allow to cool for a few minutes, then cut into large pieces or flake with a fork.

Build bowl: Divide salad greens between two large bowls. Spoon as much cooked farro on top as you like. Add roasted veggies around the perimeter and then top with fish. Drizzle lemon-yogurt dressing on top, and garnish with chopped fresh dill. Serve with a nice glass of sauvignon blanc.

Serves 2.

This vegan Pho recipe will change your mind about Vietnamese Noodle Soup

By ALFEA JAMAL
HINDUSTAN TIMES, NEW DELHI

Think Pho, and your tastebuds willl make you travel back to a rich, well cooked broth layered with flavours of different meats including pork and beef, and it may be close to impossible to imagine that one can get that depth of flavour from vegetables, however that is where you are wrong. This vegan recipe for Pho, or Vietnamese Noodle Soup will turn you over your head about vegetables with the depth of flavour that comes from adding charred veggies, the right spices and ensuring the umami flavour making it the most wholesome, well-rounded comfort food dish to fill you up without packing on the pounds. While a large number of ingredients are required for this dish, one can prepare large quantities and refrigerate it, using it through the week as one desires. Read on:

INGREDIENTS

PHO BROTH INGREDIENTS:
- 1 large white onion, peeled and halved
- 3-inch piece of fresh ginger, halved lengthwise
- 5 star anise
- 4 whole cloves
- 3 (3-inch) cinnamon sticks
- 2 cardamom pods
- 1 tablespoon whole coriander seeds
- 8 cups good-quality vegetable stock (or mushroom stock*)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce or tamari
- 2 teaspoons rice vinegar
- fine sea salt, to taste

PHO SOUP INGREDIENTS:
- 7 ounces uncooked thin rice noodles
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (or any neutral-flavored oil)
- 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 heads baby bok choy, halved

Optional: 1-2 cups extra veggies (such as sliced carrots, broccoli florets, snow peas, etc.)

Garnishes: fresh herbs (cilantro, mint, and/or Thai basil), bean sprouts, lime wedges, thinly-sliced chillies (Thai bird chillies or jalapeños), thinly-sliced onions (green onions or white onions), sauces (hoisin and/or sriracha)

INSTRUCTIONS

Char the onions and ginger. Turn the oven broiler to high, and place the baking rack about 8 inches away from the heating elements. Place the onion and ginger cut-side-up on a baking sheet, and brush with a bit of oil. Broil for about 7-10 minutes, until the tops of the onion and ginger are slightly charred. Remove and set aside.

Prep the noodles. Meanwhile, as your broth is simmering, cook the noodles separately al dente according to the package instructions. Drain in a strainer, then briefly rinse the noodles with cold water to prevent them from continuing to cook. (I also recommend tossing the noodles with a drizzle of oil—such as sesame oil—to prevent them from sticking.)

Make the broth. Meanwhile, heat the anise, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom and coriander to a large stock pot over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes until fragrant. Add in the charred onion, ginger, stock, and stir to combine. Continue cooking until the broth reaches a simmer. Then reduce heat to medium-low, cover with a lid, and continue to simmer for at least 30 minutes. Strain out (and discard) the onions, ginger and spices. Stir the brown sugar, soy sauce and rice vinegar into the hot broth. Then finally, taste and season the broth with salt as needed. Continue simmering on medium-low, covered, until ready to serve.

Cook the veggies. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the sliced mushrooms and sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until cooked through and lightly golden. Remove from heat. Then 5 minutes before you are ready to serve the soup, stir the mushrooms, bok choy and veggies into the hot broth so that they can briefly cook.

Assemble. The anticipation is over, and now we get to the best part which is assembly of this complicated looking dish. Begin by adding noodles to the bowl, followed by ladles of soup, plenty of veggies and complete the plating by adding plenty of garnish and a generous squeeze of lime juice.

Serve immediately. Soups taste best when they're piping hot and you gulp down the scalding liquid down without any hesitation, so don't wait any longer and enjoy your broth, adding extra accompaniments and sauces as per your taste preference.

Life & Style

(PHOTO BY MATT SAYLES/INVISION/AP, FILE)

In this April 17, 2013 file photo, Thomas Bangalter, left, and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, from the music group, Daft Punk, pose for a portrait in Los Angeles. The Grammy-winning French act have announced their break up.

Grammy-winning duo Daft Punk break up after 28 years

NEW YORK (AP)—Grammy-winning electronic music pioneers Daft Punk have announced that they are breaking up after 28 years.

The helmet-wearing French duo shared the news Monday in an 8-minute video called "Epilogue." Kathryn Frazier, the band's longtime publicist, confirmed the break up for The Associated Press.

Daft Punk, comprised of Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, have had major success over the years, winning six Grammy Awards and launching international hits with "One More Time," "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" and "Get Lucky."

Bangalter and de Homem-Christo met at a Paris school in 1987. Prior to Daft Punk, they formed an indie rock band named Darling.

They officially formed Daft Punk in 1993, and the helmeted, mute and mysterious musicians released their debut album, "Homework," in 1997. They first found success with the international hit "Da Funk," which topped the Billboard dance charts and earned them their first Grammy nomination. A second No. 1 hit and Grammy nomination followed with "Around the World."

Daft Punk spent time touring around the world and reached greater heights with their sophomore album, 2001's "Discovery." It included the infectious smash "One More Time" and "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger," which Kanye West famously flipped into his own hit "Stronger," released in 2007. It won West the best rap solo performance Grammy at the 2008 show, where West and Daft Punk performed together onstage.

A year later, a live version of "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" won Daft Punk the best dance recording Grammy—their first win—and their "Alive 2007" album picked up best electronic/dance album.

But it was the 2014 Grammys where Daft Punk really took the spotlight, winning album of the year for "Random Access Memories" and making history as the first electronic act to win the highest honor at the Grammys. The duo won four awards that night, including record of the year for their bombshell hit "Get Lucky," featuring Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers.

Norway museum: Munch wrote 'madman' sentence on 'The Scream'

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Norway's National Museum says a small, barely visible sentence written with a pencil on Edvard Munch's 1893 masterpiece "The Scream" was penned by the Norwegian painter himself.

The painting which shows a waif-like figure cradling its head in its hands with its mouth agape, has become a global icon for the expression of human anxiety. The sentence—"can only have been painted by a madman"—was scribbled in the top left-hand corner.

The painting is being prepared to be exhibited at the new National Museum of Norway that is due to open in Oslo, the Norwegian capital, in 2022. In this connection, the canvas has undergone research and conservation.

"The writing is without a doubt Munch's own," Mai Britt Guleng, curator at the National Museum, said in a statement Monday, adding it was compared to the painter's own scribbling in diaries and letters.

"The handwriting itself, as well as events that happened in 1895, when Munch showed the painting in Norway for the first time, all point in the same direction," Guleng said.

The writing on the canvas was added after Munch had completed the painting but for years it has been a mystery, the museum said in a statement. Speculation has ranged from it being an act of vandalism by an outraged viewer to something written by Munch himself.

Guleng said the inscription was likely made "in 1895, when Munch exhibited the painting for the first time."

Syfy's 'Resident Alien' invader gets lift-off with viewers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Resident Alien," a new Syfy series that caught the attention of veteran TV critic Rob Owen and approving viewers, is evidence that inventive shows exist outside premium cable and streaming services.

"It's been a while since there's been a cable show, a basic cable show on USA or Syfy or another one of those channels, that's struck me as something I would go back and give another look," Owen, a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review columnist, said of the comic book-inspired series that arrived in January.

An hour-long dramedy about an extraterrestrial being stuck in a small town, "Resident Alien" gained early traction in the ratings. It pulled in a bigger audience for its second episode than its first, a rarity in the peak-TV era of dizzying decisions about what's worth your time and money.

The numbers are on a modest scale but with promise enough to gladden the heart of Syfy's parent company, NBCUniversal, which gave the series a robust blastoff that included a NBC network promotional spot starring a UFO.

"We launch shows all the time and we want to pretend that every show can be the next big hit," said NBCUniversal executive Jeff Bader, who heads its TV programming strategy group. "But it's actually rare that you have a show that people seem to respond to ... and this is one of those shows."

AP

This image released by SYFY shows Judah Prehn, from left, Gracelyn Awad Rinke and Alien Harry in the new series "Resident Alien."

Punishment doesn't fit crime after boy is caught with porn

DEAR ABBY: When I stopped by my brother's house a couple of weeks ago, he mentioned that his 9-year-old son was grounded in his bedroom. He was being punished for snooping in his dad's vintage collection of porn.

At first I was upset with my brother and his wife, because it was their fault that the boy had access to it, and boys are naturally curious. But when I found out what his punishment was, I became enraged. Their "brilliant" idea was to make my nephew disgusted with porn by forcing him to look at the entire collection for three hours instead of playing outside.

Maybe this tactic works for cigarette smoking or chewing tobacco, but this seemed very wrong. I was so appalled, I overstepped; I went straight into my nephew's room and told him he was allowed to go outside and play. Abby, what do you think? Am I being ridiculous? What should I have done?

APPALLED IN OHIO

DEAR APPALLED: The child's punishment was extreme and inappropriate. What you SHOULD have done was point out to your brother and sister-in-law that their punishment may have been counterproductive. Rather than working as aversion therapy, it could result in whetting their son's appetite for more. You might also have suggested they consult a child psychologist for suggestions on how to deal with their son's budding sexual curiosity, which is entirely normal, and urged that from now on they keep their collection under lock and key.

DEAR ABBY: I recently met a very nice woman online. During our first phone call, she told me about an injury she received a few months ago that has left her with a disability. I'm not bothered by it, and I'd like to get to know her better.

From the way she responded to a few things, I got the impression that she is still coming to terms with what has happened, as anyone would be. I have no experience with a situation like this, and I have no idea if, from the perspective of dating, it is the right thing to engage someone who is going through this. Any thoughts?

TENTATIVE IN INDIANA

DEAR TENTATIVE: Yes, it's the right thing—but only if you can be supportive and patient during what has to be an extremely emotionally disruptive time in this woman's life. I am sure she could use a supportive male friend right now, as long as you two can continue to have an open and honest dialogue with each other.

DEAR ABBY: My 30-year-old son lives with me for financial reasons, and I love him dearly. He helps with bills and works a full-time job. My only problem with him is he wears the same pair of pants for weeks without washing them and hasn't washed his sheets in months. I didn't raise him that way. He does take a shower every night.

He owns only one pair of pants, and I can't get him to buy another pair. I have complained to him several times about the bad smell. How can I get him to change his ways?

FED-UP MOTHER IN TEXAS

DEAR FED UP: At this point in his life, that may not be possible. It seems strange to me that someone who smells bad could hold a full-time job, but I will take your word for it. The easiest solution to your problem might be for you to wash his bedding every few weeks. As to the fact that he has only one pair of pants, buy him a pair for his next birthday or for Christmas—whichever comes sooner.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

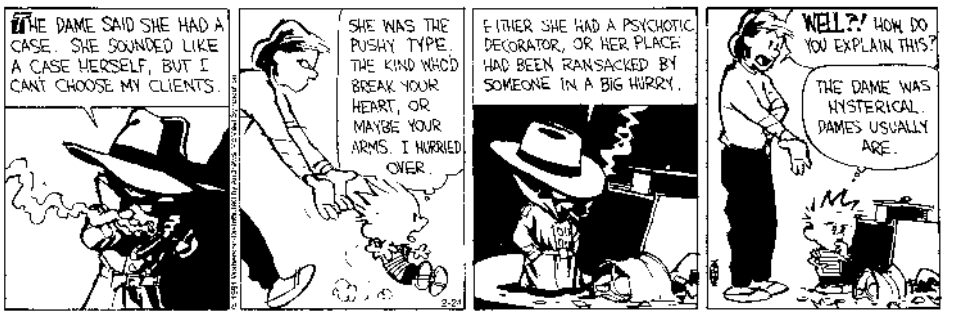
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THE DAME SAID SHE HAD A CASE. SHE SOUNDED LIKE A CASE HERSELF, BUT I CAN'T CHOOSE MY CLIENTS.
SHE WAS THE PUSHY TYPE. THE KIND WHO'D BREAK YOUR HEART, OR MAYBE YOUR ARMS. I HURRIED OVER.
EITHER SHE HAD A PSYCHOTIC DECORATOR, OR HER PLACE HAD BEEN RANSACKED BY SOMEONE IN A BIG HURRY.
WELL?! HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?
THE DAME WAS HYSTERICAL. DAMES USUALLY ARE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

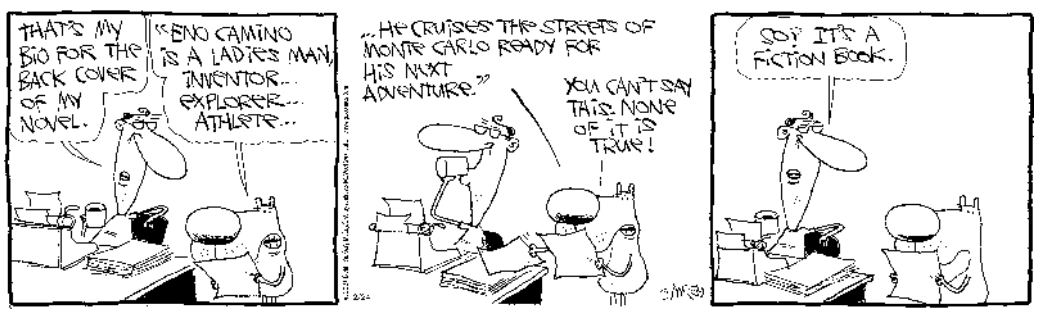
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CHEERS TO YOU HAVING YOUR BOOK PICKED UP!
CHING
I HOPE THIS CELEBRATION ISN'T PREMATURE. THEY SAID THERE'S A BIDDING WAR.
YOU GOT A BIDDING WAR?
SORRY! SORRY! VERY HAPPY! CHEERS, CHEERS! I'M OKAY! CHEERS. CHEERS, CHEERS!
2-24

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


THAT'S MY BIO FOR THE BACK COVER OF MY NOVEL.
"ENO CAMINO IS A LADIES MAN, INVENTOR... EXPLORER... ATHLETE...
...HE CRUISES THE STREETS OF MONTE CARLO READY FOR HIS NEXT ADVENTURE."
YOU CAN'T SAY THIS. NONE OF IT IS TRUE!
SO? IT'S A FICTION BOOK.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Pot-bellied pet
4 Gridiron stats
7 Constructed
8 Follows
10 Element No. 5
11 Supernatural
13 Complains noisily
16 ACLU concerns
17 Plane assignments
18 In the past
19 Ledge
20 Unforeseen problem
21 "El Capitan" composer
23 Implores
25 Dazzle
26 Attempt
27 "Kidding!"
28 Boyfriends
30 Narc's org.
33 Gets tough (on)
36 Widen
37 Light brown
38 Fork prongs
39 "— chic!"
40 Citric beverage
41 Part of NATO

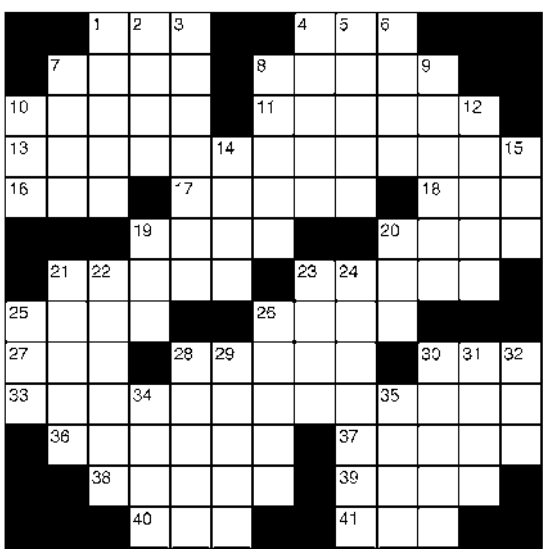
DOWN

1 Seine city
2 Nuptial vows
3 First book of the Bible
4 Marina boat
5 Cuts into cubes
6 Disparaging remark
7 Castle defense
8 Sum
9 Everett of "Citizen Kane"
10 "It's c-c-cold!"
12 Roman robes
14 Actress Ward
15 London mist
19 Day light
20 Pvt.'s superior
21 Offered one's seat
22 Be smarter than
23 "Nope!"
24 Ancient stone
25 NBC show since 1975
26 Fills up
28 Trademark
29 Makeup mogul Lauder
30 Wooden peg
31 Billions of years
32 Author Tan
34 Lamb alias
35 Lisa's brother

Solution time: 23 mins.

W	H	A	M		B	A	T		D	C	L	L
H	U	L	U		A	B	A		A	M	I	C
O	'	A	F		S	A	N		T	I	Z	C
S	A	N	F	O	R	D		S	I	T	A	R
			I	M	A		P	A	N			
S	T	U	N	G		S	A	N	G	R	I	A
A	I	R			C	P	R			C	O	D
S	A	N	T	A	N	A		B	R	A	N	D
			A	N	N		T	U	C			
S	T	O	W	E		S	A	N	C	T	U	M
S	A	N	D	W	I	C	H		A	E	R	O
T	I	E	R		S	A	D		N	A	G	S
S	'	A	Y		M	M	E		T	R	E	S

Yesterday's answer 2-24



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: O'Shea Jackson Jr., 30; Billy Zane, 55; Helen Shaver, 70; Edward James Olmos, 74.

Happy Birthday: Don't limit what you can do. Verify facts, and move forward with confidence. Be willing to put in the energy and time required to make a difference. Positive acts will bring the results you desire. Put an end to emotional spending. A change to how you earn or handle your money will set the stage for a better future. Your numbers are 6, 11, 18, 25, 34, 36, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Find your balance, embrace discipline and go after your dreams. Think outside the box; use your knowledge and skills to suit trends. Keep up, find solutions and make a difference. Personal gains look promising. Romance and self-improvement are favored. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take your time, be cautious and make necessary changes. Let experience, not your emotions, dictate how you progress. Look for original ways to solve old problems, and you will spark enthusiasm and support from those who have something to offer. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Say what's on your mind, and clear up any misunderstanding that may stand in the way. Be honest, and make a point to articulate facts as they are verified. Knowledge is powerful and will lead to opportunity and new beginnings. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Look for a unique way to use your knowledge and skills. Being open to diverse alternatives to how you earn your living or handle your cash will lead to positive results. Be a leader, not a follower. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You'll face decisions you aren't ready to make. Refuse to let anyone pressure you into something prematurely. Focus on meaningful relationships, keeping the peace and opting for love and affection over anger and discord. Protect your health and well-being. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Consider what makes you happy, then go in that direction. How you live, what you learn and the people you associate with will determine what you get out of life. Embrace people who stimulate your mind and encourage you to be unique. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Address money matters before it's too late. Look at the changes going on around you, and make adjustments that ensure security and stability. Be open about what you want and how you feel, and you'll gain support. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Evaluate what you are up against, be sezcretive regarding your intentions and use your intuition to make the most out of whatever comes your way. Making adjustments at home or to relationships may not sit well with others. Proceed with caution. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* An unwanted change will turn out to be benevolent. Time heals all wounds, and a demonstrative approach to life will encourage you to come back better, stronger and with the finesse that will push you forward. Love is on the rise. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take advantage of an opportunity that allows you to put your long-term plans in motion. Don't worry about what others do or say; follow the path that leads to your happiness and peace of mind. Gravitate toward beneficial partnerships. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't get angry; get moving. How you handle situations will determine what's to follow. Be fair, direct and in pursuit of the truth, but refuse to let your emotions take over and lead to something you regret. Patience will help resolve issues. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Zero in on what you want to accomplish, and direct your energy accordingly. What you achieve today can change the way you work and live moving forward. Don't let anger set in; action is required. Do your part. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are forceful, active and competitive. You are steadfast and innovative.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				4	5	2	7
	7	2		8		4	
	5		9			8	
		1			9		
	6				2		
9			6	3		4	
5		6			1		3	8
4	2					1	7	
7						6		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/24

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	9	3	8	6	7	4	5	1
1	8	7	4	2	5	9	3	6
6	4	5	9	3	1	7	2	8
4	1	8	2	9	6	3	7	5
5	3	6	1	7	4	2	8	9
7	2	9	3	5	8	6	1	4
9	7	4	5	8	3	1	6	2
3	5	1	6	4	2	8	9	7
8	6	2	7	1	9	5	4	3

Difficulty Level ★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PIERRE CARDIN (1922-2020) Solution: 8 letters

P	A	E	Y	E	V	E	E	U	Q	I	T	U	O	B
R	I	P	L	A	C	O	S	T	E	S	O	R	U	U
I	R	E	A	S	N	R	E	T	T	A	P	B	N	N
N	A	R	T	Q	A	H	A	T	S	K	B	R	I	K
T	M	U	I	R	U	Ⓐ	Ⓡ	Ⓣ	Ⓢ	L	P	A	Q	A
E	S	T	F	S	O	I	P	A	E	A	S	N	U	F
M	E	U	A	D	D	F	N	D	R	W	F	D	E	U
P	S	O	S	N	L	M	R	I	D	T	I	C	T	K
S	U	C	H	E	O	A	S	E	P	A	T	N	N	O
K	L	E	I	R	G	X	E	H	N	C	O	E	A	S
I	C	T	O	T	A	I	I	M	O	C	M	G	T	A
R	U	U	N	A	S	A	D	I	I	W	H	E	S	S
T	A	A	L	E	S	S	A	N	D	R	O	O	O	N
S	V	H	C	T	A	W	L	I	V	E	N	I	C	E
A	N	D	R	E	O	L	I	V	E	R	O	B	E	P

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Alessandro, André Oliver, Arts, Avant Garde, Boutique Eve, Brand, Bubble, Bunka Fukosa, Catwalk, Choc, Costante, Dress, Elsa, Fashion, French, Gold, Hats, Haute Couture, Icon, Italy, Lacoste, Ladies, Maria, Maxi, Mini, Motifs, NASA, Paquin, Paris, Patterns, Pens, Pietro, Printemps, Robe, Rose, Show, Skirts, Tape, Trends, Unique, Vaucluse, Venice, Watch

Yesterday's Answer: Tartar

Treasuries 22 through 43 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Wizards edge Lakers in OT to extend streak

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Bradley Beal scored six of his 33 points on three consecutive possessions late in overtime, and the Washington Wizards extended their longest winning streak in three years to five straight with a 127-124 victory over the slumping Los Angeles Lakers on Monday night.

Russell Westbrook scored six of his 32 points in overtime for the Wizards, who rallied from a 17-point deficit in the second half. Washington then took advantage of a missed free throw by LeBron James late in regulation and went on to its first win over the Lakers at Staples Center since March 2017.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope hit a 3-pointer with 36 seconds left in overtime to trim the Wizards' lead to 125-124. Westbrook made a layup before missing a free throw, but James and Kyle Kuzma missed late 3s before the buzzer.

James had 31 points, 13 assists and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who struggled in the second half of their fourth loss in five games.

Montrezl Harrell had a season-high 26 points and nine rebounds for the defending NBA champions, who have lost three straight for the first time this season — not coincidentally during three consecutive games without Anthony Davis and Dennis Schröder.

After carrying the Lakers back into the game in the fourth quarter, James made a tying layup with 9.8 seconds left in regulation, but missed the ensuing free throw to put LA ahead. Beal missed a long jumper at the buzzer.

The 36-year-old James played over 43 minutes during the Lakers' fourth overtime game in 17 days, all of them at home against teams with losing records.

Davis missed his fourth straight game, and the All-NBA big man is out for at least three more weeks with a calf injury. Schröder will miss at least one more game under the NBA's health and safety protocols.

AP

Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal, center, shoots as Los Angeles Lakers center Marc Gasol, left, defends and forward LeBron James watches during the first half of an NBA game Monday, Feb. 22, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Mavericks 102, Grizzlies 92

In Dallas, Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 20 of his 29 points while the Mavericks built a big first-half lead without much help from Luka Doncic, as they returned from a weather-induced break with a victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

Dallas was playing for the first time in eight days after two postponements because of a wintry weather blast in Texas. Kristaps Porzingis didn't play after showing up on the injury report the day of the game with back stiffness.

Doncic scored 14 of his 21 points after halftime in his first game since the soon-to-be 22-year-old became the first Dallas player to be voted an All-Star starter in consecutive seasons. The Slovenian star's franchise record of 14 consecutive games with at least 25 points ended.

Two nights after falling behind by 31 at halftime in a 31-point loss to Phoenix, the Grizzlies were down 23 in the second quarter after scoring a season low for any quarter and trailing 26-13 after the first.

Ja Morant had 22 points and nine assists for Memphis. The NBA leaders in field goal percentage coming in shot 39% and went 6 of 31 from 3-point range (19%).

Suns 132, Trail Blazers 100

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 34 points, Deandre Ayton added 19 and the Suns kept rolling with a lopsided win over Portland.

It was the largest margin of victory this season for the Suns, who have won nine of 10.

Portland has lost two straight following a six-game winning streak.

Booker had 17 points in the first quarter and 22 by halftime. He finished 12 of 17 from the field and 8 for 8 at the free throw line.

Damian Lillard led the Trail Blazers with 24 points.

Jazz 132, Hornets 110

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell had 23 points and eight assists as Utah enjoyed a record-breaking performance from long range against Charlotte.

The Jazz (25-6) set a franchise mark for 3-pointers with 28, including 19 off the bench—the most by any team's backups in NBA history, according to STATS.

Joe Ingles and Georges Niang led the way, making a career-high seven 3s apiece. Each player finished with 21 points. Jordan Clarkson added 20.

Charlotte gave up 54 total 3-pointers in two games against Utah this season.

Gordon Hayward and LaMelo Ball scored 21 points apiece to lead the Hornets. Malik Monk added 20.

Bulls 120, Rockets 100

In Houston, Coby White scored 24 points and Chicago used a big third quarter to pull away from the short-handed Rockets.

Zach LaVine scored 14 of Chicago's 46 third-quarter points, finishing with 21, and the Bulls outscored the Rockets by 20 in the period to break open a tight game.

David Nwaba had 22 points off the bench to lead Houston, which has lost eight straight. The Rockets had their previous two games postponed because of a winter storm and subsequent utility outages in the Houston area.

Wendell Carter Jr. added 18 points with 13 rebounds for the Bulls, who have won four of five.

Heat 108, Thunder 94

In Oklahoma City, Duncan Robinson scored 22 points and made six 3-pointers, leading the Miami Heat over the Thunder in the finale of their seven-game road trip.

Kendrick Nunn added 20 points and nine assists, Bam Adebayo had 19 points and 13 rebounds, and they hooked up on an alley-oop dunk during Miami's 15-0 run to start the fourth quarter.

Robinson ended it with a 3 that gave the Heat a 94-77 lead midway through the final period. Miami won the final three games of the trip to finish 4-3.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points for the Thunder, who were outscored 63-40 after halftime.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	20	11	.645	0.0
Brooklyn	20	12	.625	0.5
Toronto	16	15	.516	4.0
Boston	15	15	.500	4.5
New York	15	16	.484	5.0
Central				
Milwaukee	18	13	.581	0.0
Indiana	15	14	.517	2.0
Chicago	14	16	.467	3.5
Cleveland	10	21	.323	8.0
Detroit	8	22	.267	9.5
Southeast				
Charlotte	14	16	.467	0.0
Miami	14	17	.452	0.5
Atlanta	13	17	.433	1.0
Orlando	13	18	.419	1.5
Washington	10	17	.370	2.5

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	22	9	.710	0.0
LA Clippers	22	10	.688	0.5
Phoenix	20	10	.667	1.5
Golden State	16	15	.516	6.0
Sacramento	12	18	.400	9.5
Southwest				
San Antonio	16	11	.593	0.0
Dallas	14	15	.483	3.0
Memphis	13	14	.481	3.0
New Orleans	13	17	.433	4.5
Houston	11	18	.379	6.0
Northwest				
Utah	25	6	.806	0.0
Portland	18	12	.600	6.5
Denver	16	14	.533	8.5
Oklahoma City	12	19	.387	13.0
Minnesota	7	24	.226	18.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sixers reportedly eyeing Lowry

PHILADELPHIA—Sixers president of basketball operations Daryl Morey is known for aggressively pursuing deals. Even with his team at 20-11 and leading the Eastern Conference in his first year on the job, that seems to still be the case.

The Ringer's Kevin O'Connor reported Monday that the team is "still seeking major moves to increase its championship odds."

Though O'Connor noted that "realistic targets are still unclear" with over a month until the March 25 trade deadline, he wrote that "one name to monitor is Raptors point guard Kyle Lowry."

Acquiring the 34-year-old Lowry would be a quintessential win-now move, though one that could address a key area of need for the Sixers. Lowry, who's built a strong Hall of Fame case after growing up in North Philadelphia and starring at Villanova, will be a free agent after this season. With Lowry's $30 million salary, the Sixers wouldn't be able to pull off a trade by cobbling together bench players and draft picks; they'd need to send Toronto something more substantial.

He'd give the Sixers a true point guard and likely alleviate some of the heavy burden on Joel Embiid to generate good half-court looks late in games, as well as ensuring the Sixers had a facilitator on the floor with their second unit at all times in either Lowry or Ben Simmons. Lowry's willingness to fire from three-point range (7.1 attempts per game, 38.8 percent this season), leadership and playoff experience could all also be useful.

While the Raptors have won their last 16 games without Lowry, including Sunday's victory over the Sixers, they're obviously well aware of his value in the postseason. And, after a 2-8 start, Toronto has looked like a team deserving of respect come playoff time.

Another big-name player who was a theoretical option for the Sixers after the Nets landed James Harden is Wizards star Bradley Beal, though O'Connor reports, "Unless something changes between now and the deadline, Bradley Beal won't be available. All indications are that he and the Wizards front office will wait until the offseason to sort out their future."

If the Sixers don't make a splashy trade, it would be unsurprising to see Morey acquire a bench player or two. Rotations tend to shorten in the playoffs, but the Sixers' second unit has struggled lately and could be upgraded before the deadline. ***(NBC)***

Cowboys hope for long-term deal with Prescott

DALLAS (AP)—The Cowboys hope to have a long-term deal completed with Dak Prescott before the franchise-tag deadline March 9.

The two-week franchise-tag window opens Tuesday, so the clock is ticking on a new deal.

Bucs receiver Chris Godwin or Bucs pass rusher Shaq Barrett, Lions receiver Kenny Golladay, Chargers tight end Hunter Henry and Broncos safety Justin Simmons are among other candidates for the franchise tag.

Tagging Prescott a second consecutive year would come at a cost of $37.7 million to the Cowboys. Against an expected salary cap of somewhere between $180 million and $185 million, that will tie up a huge chunk of the team's cap.

According to reports, Prescott's representation and the Cowboys already have had discussions, "if not actual negotiations."

The sides have negotiated almost two years without reaching agreement, so both sides already have a good idea of what the other seeks.

If the sides can't reach a long-term deal by March 9, the Cowboys are expected to use the franchise tag on Prescott. That would give them until July 15 to continue negotiating.

But the Cowboys would have to carry the $37.7 million tag number on their salary cap until/if working out a long-term deal.

Meanwhile, Washington is expected to begin contract talks with offensive guard Brandon Scherff soon.

It appears the team has no intention of letting Scherff leave in free agency.

Washington tagged the Pro Bowler last offseason, and he played 2020 under the $15.03 million franchise tag.

The team could use the franchise tag on Scherff again, if necessary, but Washington is more interested in getting a long-team deal completed. A new deal could reset the market for guards, topping the $14.1 million annual average that Philadelphia pays Brandon Brooks.

Scherff would make $18.04 million on a second tag. But tagging Scherff would buy the team four more months to get a long-term deal done if they can't get it completed before then.

Washington is projected to have around $38 million in salary cap space based on a projected cap of $180.5 million, according to overthecap.com.

Scherff, 29, made All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors last season despite missing three games with a medical collateral ligament sprain. He has spent time on injured reserve each of the past three seasons and has not played a full, 16-game season since 2016, his second year in the league.

He has made four Pro Bowls in six seasons.

In Jacksonville, it is currently unclear if the Jags intends to take advantage of the franchise tag this season. Last year, it used the tag on Yannick Ngakoue, who was later traded to the Minnesota Vikings.

But if the Jags do choose to tag a player in 2021, there's one clear-cut candidate: offensive tackle Cam Robinson. The fourth-year player's rookie deal expired this season, and he is set to become an unrestricted free agent in a couple of weeks.

Jacksonville could choose to extend Robinson, who has developed into a solid player despite having some injury issues throughout the early part of his career. But if it doesn't want to get locked up in a long-term deal, it could choose to tag him to keep him around for one more season, albeit at a bit of a high price tag.

AP

In this Oct. 11, 2020 file photo, Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) prepares for the snap under center during an NFL game against the New York Giants in Arlington, Texas.

Newton shuns retirement talks

After a New England Patriots debut season that saw Cam Newton throw more interceptions than touchdowns, the former NFL MVP says he's heard the retirement chatter.

He's not having it.

In an appearance on the "I am athlete" podcast with former NFL players Chad Johnson, Brandon Marshall and Fred Taylor, Newton made clear he intends to keep playing. And he believes he's still a starting-caliber quarterback in the NFL.

"Hell no," Newton said of retirement. "I can't go out like that. I hear all of that talk. My pride won't allow me to do it. There aren't 32 guys better than me."

Coming off of two injury-riddled seasons with the Carolina Panthers, Newton, 31, looked little like the electric quarterback that accompanied his Superman persona during his MVP prime.

He started strong as the Patriots won two of their first three games with Newton under center. He combined for six touchdowns against two turnovers in the 2-1 start, lending hope in New England that the Patriots could find success after Tom Brady.

But Newton contracted COVID-19 and didn't suit up for a Week 4 game against the Kansas City Chiefs. When he returned in Week 5 against the Denver Broncos, the Patriots offense went stagnant, and New England embarked on a three-game losing streak. When the season was over, the Patriots had missed the playoffs at 7-9, and Newton had tallied eight passing touchdowns against 10 interceptions.

The one-season experiment in New England was far from a success.

So does Newton—a pending free agent— want another shot in New England even if it arrives with another one-year deal?

"Yes. Hell yes," Newton said. "I'm getting tired of changing. I'm at the point in my career where I know way more than I knew last year."

Whether the Patriots want Newton back is an entirely different question. After the bitter taste of third place in the AFC East, they may be ready to turn the page. For now there's not an apparent answer at quarterback in New England.

If New England—or any other prospective Newton suitor—is looking for a bright side from his 2020 campaign, it's that he was still effective as a runner, tallying 592 yards and 12 touchdowns on the ground on 4.3 yards per carry.

Osaka back to No. 2; Medvedev No. 3

MELBOURNE (AP)—Naomi Osaka's Australian Open championship moved her up one spot to No. 2 in the WTA rankings Monday, while men's finalist Daniil Medvedev rose to a career-best No. 3 behind winner Novak Djokovic on the ATP list.

Jennifer Brady, the 25-year-old American who was the runner-up to Osaka, jumped 11 spots to No. 13, her first time inside the Top 20.

Aslan Karatsev's historic run from qualifying to the final four before losing to nine-time Australian Open champion Djokovic allowed him to vault 72 places from 114th to 42nd. He is the first man in the professional era to reach the semifinals in his debut in the main draw of a major tournament.

Despite winning the past two Grand Slam tournaments she entered, Osaka still trails No. 1 Ash Barty—who lost in the quarterfinals at Melbourne Park—because of the way the tennis tours are calculating what they're calling "frozen" rankings following last season's hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Essentially, in order for players' rankings not to be hurt if they skipped events as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the WTA gives credit for someone's best 16 tournaments since March 2019.

Barty took nearly a full year off, for example, but still has her points from winning the 2019 French Open and reaching the semifinals at the 2020 Australian Open.

Serena Williams climbed four spots from No. 11 to No. 7 to get back into the Top 10 after making it to the semifinals in Australia a year after losing in the third round there.

She was beaten by Osaka, whose 6-4, 6-3 victory over Brady in the final on Saturday gave her a fourth major championship, all on hard courts: the 2018 and 2010 U.S. Opens, and the 2019 and 2021 Australian Opens.

After her previous title in Melbourne, Osaka became the first tennis player from Asia to reach No. 1 in the women's or men's rankings. She was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and Haitian father; they moved to the United States when Osaka was 3.

Osaka now swaps places with Simona Halep, who goes from No. 2 to No. 3 after losing to Williams in the quarterfinals.

Aryna Sabalenka now leads the WTA doubles rankings after pairing with Elise Mertens to win the Australian Open women's doubles title. Sabalenka is No. 8 in singles, making her the first woman to be No. 1 in doubles and in the Top 10 in singles since Sara Errani in February 2014.

After beating Medvedev 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 on Sunday for his 18th Grand Slam title, Djokovic is assured of remaining at No. 1 at least another two weeks, which will raise his career total in that spot to 311. That means he will break Roger Federer's ATP record of 310 weeks atop the rankings.

Rafael Nadal stayed at No. 2 after losing in the quarterfinals, while Medvedev's second appearance in a Grand Slam final pushed him up one spot. Medvedev trades places with Dominic Thiem, who dropped to No. 4 after losing in the fourth round.

There were no other changes in the men's Top 10, including Roger Federer remaining at No. 5 despite not having competed in more than a year after having two knee operations. He is expected to return to the tour next month.

Angels slugger Pujols to retire after season

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)— Albert Pujols' wife apparently disclosed that the Los Angeles Angels slugger intends to retire after the upcoming season, although she later amended her social media post to be less definitive.

The 41-year-old Pujols, a three-time MVP and 10-time All-Star, reported to spring training with the Angels on Monday.

In a post on her Instagram account later in the day, Deidre Pujols wrote: "Today is the first day of the last season of one of the most remarkable careers in sports!" Shortly afterward, she amended the statement with a parenthetical "based on his contract."

Pujols' 10-year, $240 million contract with the Angels ends after this season, his 21st in the majors. But the fifth-leading home run hitter in major league history has repeatedly declined to say whether this season will be his last, and he repeated his uncertainty earlier this month in an interview with ESPN Deportes.

AP

In this Sept. 9, 2020 file photo, Los Angeles Angels' Albert Pujols stands in the batter's box waiting on a pitch from the Texas Rangers during a game in Arlington, Texas.

Pujols is the oldest player in the majors, and he is a decade removed from his heyday in St. Louis. He won three NL MVP awards and two World Series titles with the Cardinals from 2001-11 but hasn't come close to those feats with the Angels.

On Instagram, Deidre Pujols went on to praise her husband "as he finishes this good race."

"God isn't finished with you yet my love and as you finish out this season I know, already prepared for you is another journey full of goodness waiting on the other side," Deidre Pujols wrote. "Thank you for 21 years of incredible baseball thrills! Finish strong like the Angel you are and I know you will wow us all this 2021 season as usual! 700 we are coming after you."

Albert Pujols has 662 career homers, trailing Alex Rodriguez (696) for fourth. Pujols has hit more than 31 homers just once in his nine seasons with the Angels, which means his chances of becoming the fourth player in major league history with 700 homers this year would hinge on an extraordinary power resurgence.

Pujols still is one of the greatest hitters of his generation, combining power and consistency at the plate during a two-decade career.

He parlayed his success in St. Louis into an extraordinary contract from Angels owner Arte Moreno in December 2011. But Pujols' production in Anaheim has never consistently reached the heights of his 11 years in St. Louis, and the Angels haven't won a playoff game during his tenure alongside three-time AL MVP Mike Trout.

Pujols has batted .257 with 217 homers and 771 RBIs in his nine seasons with the Angels, dropping his career average to .299. He batted a career-worst .224 last season with nine homers and 25 RBIs in the coronavirus-shortened campaign.

Walker guaranteed $23M in over 3 years

Taijuan Walker is guaranteed $23 million over three seasons in his contract with the New York Mets and would get $25.5 million if he pitches at least 175 innings in 2022.

Veteran outfielder Kevin Pillar is guaranteed $5 million as part of his deal, which includes player and team options for 2022.

Walker gets a $2 million signing bonus payable on April 1 and salaries of $8 million this season and $7 million in 2022 as part of the deal announced Saturday.

His agreement includes a $6 million player option for 2023 with a $3 million buyout, and the option price can increase to as much as $8.5 million based on innings in 2022: $250,000 each for 125 and 135, and $500,000 apiece for 145, 155, 165 and 175.

He would receive a one-time assignment bonus if traded, payable by the acquiring team.

Walker also has award bonuses of $50,000 each for All-Star, Gold Glove, Silver Slugger or League Championship Series MVP and $100,000 for World Series MVP. He would get $50,000 for winning a Cy Young Award, $25,000 for finishing second in the voting and $10,000 for third.

The 28-year-old Walker joins a rotation headed by two-time Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom. New York's need for a pitcher increased with the loss of versatile right-hander Seth Lugo, who will miss the start of the season following elbow surgery Tuesday to remove a bone spur.

New owner Steven Cohen has displayed a willingness to spend, retaining Marcus Stroman with an $18.9 million qualifying offer and acquiring fellow starter Carlos Carrasco from Cleveland in a trade along with All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor for a rotation also projected to include lefty David Peterson.

Walker has a five-pitch repertoire with a 93 mph fastball mixed among sliders, split-finger fastballs, sinkers and curveballs.

He was 4-3 with a 2.70 ERA over 11 starts during the pandemic-shortened season for Seattle and Toronto, which acquired him Aug. 27 for a player to be named, who became outfield prospect Alberto Rodriguez.

Walker earned $740,741 in prorated pay from a $2 million salary last year and $374,620 in bonuses for $1,115,361 in total income.

Pillar gets a $3.6 million salary this year, and the deal includes a $2.9 million player option for 2022 with no buyout. If Pillar declines the option, the Mets would have a $6.4 million team option with a $1.4 million buyout.

M-LEAGUE

From Page 20

TanHoldings FC debuting against NMI U18 Team 8 at 1:30pm. Next up is the 3:30pm tiff between Paire FC and The One FC, while Kanoa FC will challenge the NMI Team A in the third game at 5:30pm. For the final match in the opening week, the Old B Bank will square off against MP United FC at 7:30pm.

M-League's Division A has a double-round robin format in the regular season.

The spring season in the M-League has started after receiving clearance from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and NMIFA will be implementing safety measures at the NMISTC at the duration of the competition and any other soccer-related activities at the facilities.

KAGMAN

From Page 20

In the 1,000m, Kagman's co-ed team finished the preliminary race way ahead of Saipan Southern and MHS. The Ayuyus recorded 6:44.94 against the 6:55:04 and 6:58.28 of the Rays and Dolphins, respectively. In the finals, Kagman chopped off more than three seconds from its prelims time after registering 6:41.15, while Saipan Southern logged 6:46.52 and MHS checked in at 7:03.40.

Kagman men's paddlers were joined in the co-ed team by Alisa Gatharngeg, Jenisha Dubrall, David Kim, Danika and Clarissa Tagabuel, Megan Barnes, Wallis Bai, Kiara Nekaifes, and Kata Iakopo.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Marianas High School's co-ed team members switch sides during the 500m race.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Southern High School paddlers make a final push to catch up with their opponents in the 500m race.

Entering this weekend's third leg (long-distance race), Kagman enjoys an 8-point lead over Saipan Southern, as the Ayuyus have 20 points in the co-ed division against the Rays' 12. MHS has only 4 markers.

Points are awarded in every leg (except the first one/warm-up) to determine the overall winners in each division at the end of the season. Excluding this weekend's long distance race, there will be two more legs in the competition with the penultimate set for March 6 and the last for March 13 where double points are at stake.

Wizards edge Lakers in OT to extend streak

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Cowboys hope for long-term deal with Prescott

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Kagman paddlers stand out

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School paddlers are on their way to a first place finish in the finals of the co-ed 500m event during the opening leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series held early this month at Kilili Beach.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School coach Jason Tarkong greets his paddlers after their victory in the men's 1,000m race.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Kagman High School topped both the men's and co-ed division competitions in the second leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series last Saturday at Kilili Beach.

The Ayuyus, who ruled the opening leg last Feb. 13, picked up where they left off and this time took the most points at stake in the second set of races for a sizeable lead over Marianas High School and Saipan Southern High School.

In the men's races, Kagman collected 20 points, as it finished first in the 500m and 1,000m preliminary and finals events. The Ayuyus timed in at 2:45.61 in the 500m prelims, nearly four seconds ahead of the Rays (2:49.12) and more than 16 seconds faster than the Dolphins' time (3:02.18). In the finals, Kagman had a faster time and wider gap from MHS, as the former recorded 2:41.93 against the latter's 2:50.81. Saipan Southern slid to third with its 2:54.24.

In the 1,000m prelims, Kagman was the lone team to break the six-minute mark after reaching the finish line of the four-lap race in 5:53.06. MHS placed second with its 6:08.30, while Saipan Southern was third after logging 6:18.67. In the finals, the Ayuyus had a slower time (6:04.00), but still it was good enough to beat the Dolphins (6:11.49) and Rays (6:21.75).

Giving Kagman the sweep in the men's division were Noah Mesa, Elbert and Joedy Pinaula, Christian Achas, Koen Kabiriel, Jericho Jones, Jacoby Cabrera, Andrew Camacho, David Igisai, Sebastian Muna, Max Cruz, Richard Cepeda, and Oliver Weilbacher. Peter Aldan, Jason Tarkong, and Momoko Halstead are the Ayuyus coaches.

In the co-ed races, Kagman timed in at 3:01.12 in the 500m prelims and then improved its mark in the finals (2:53.18) to dominate the event. Saipan Southern was ranked second in both races, posting 3:02.46 in the prelims and a better time in the finals at 3:01.17. MHS had a faster mark in the prelims (3:06.77) than the finals (3:10.23) for third place.

See KAGMAN on Page 19

M-League returns, opens spring season

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Lilian Podziewski, seen here performing warm-up drills during a clinic at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville, will be suiting up for the NMI Women's National Team in the M-League Spring 2021.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Soccer competition returns after nearly a year of absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic with the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's M-League holding its spring season.

The M-League Spring 2021 is divided into two divisions—A and B—and had its first game last night at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. Saipan United and Shirley's Football Club kicked off the action in the M-League, as they squared off in the 7:30pm match in Division B. Results in the opener were unavailable at press time.

Joining Saipan United and Shirley's FC in the battle for Division B championship this season is the NMI Women's National Team, Bangladesh FC, Island Star, and Matansa FC. Bangladesh FC will have its season debut tomorrow night when it takes on the WNT, while the Island Star will duel Matansa FC this Saturday. All matches in Division B will be played at 7:30pm every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and each squad will have nine matches in the regular season before moving to compete in the M-League Cup.

In Division A, games will be played every Friday and Sunday.

TanHoldings FC, NMI U18 Team A and B, Paire FC, Kanoa FC, The One FC, Old B Bank, and MP United will vie for Division A crown and matches will start this weekend.

Four matches are scheduled for this Sunday with

See M-LEAGUE on Page 19